

பெரிய பஞ்சவர்ண சிவனார்

நாமம் தலை

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EIGHTH EDITION

1958

**AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY**  
**CHICAGO, U. S. A.**



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# AUTHORS AND COLLABORATORS

## BERNARD F. BAKER, B.S.

Supervisor of Vocational Business Education, Chicago Public Schools  
Author of *Effective Retail Selling*  
Formerly Instructor in Business, Englewood High School, Chicago

## HARRY A. BATES

Retired Former Vice-President, Reincke-Ellis-Younggreen and Finn, Inc.,  
Advertising Agency, Chicago

## ROWLAND BURNSTAN, Ph.D., Sc.D.

President, Indian Motorcycle Company  
Formerly Professor of Economics and Chairman of the Department, Carleton College  
Formerly Director of Research, Armour & Company  
Formerly Economist, United States Department of Commerce  
Formerly Associate Editor, *Survey of Current Business*

## JOHN A. CHAMBERLAIN, A.B., LL.B.

Attorney, Cleveland, Ohio  
Formerly Lecturer on Suretyship, Western Reserve Law School  
Author of *Principles of Business Law*  
Contributor to Law Journals

## JAY F. CHRIST, A.B., J.D.

Associate Professor of Business Law, School of Business, The University of Chicago  
Author of *Fundamental Business Law, Elements of Commercial Law, Modern Business Law, Law of Contracts and Sales*  
Formerly Associate Editor of *Legal Periodical Digest*  
Formerly Director and Chief of Radio Code Instruction, U.S. Naval Training School (Radio) at The University of Chicago  
Co-author of *Outlines of Economic Order*

## RAYMOND V. CRADIT, B.S., M.A.

Member, Missouri and Florida Bars  
Formerly Professor of Commerce, Northeastern Oklahoma State Teachers College  
Financial Analyst, U.S. Signal Corps Price Adjustment Section, Chicago  
Author of *Business Organization, Office Management, Bookkeeping for Personal and Business Use*

## HENRY POST DUTTON, B.E.E.

Chairman, Department of Industrial Engineering, and Professor of Business Management, Illinois Institute of Technology  
Formerly Professor of Factory Management, Northwestern University  
Consultant in Management

## L. E. FRAILEY, B.A.

Lecturer, Author, and Business Letter Counselor  
Sales Consultant, National Association of Real Estate Boards  
Formerly Instructor in Business Letters, Northwestern University  
Formerly Editorial Director, The Dartnell Corporation  
Formerly Personnel Director, Purina Mills

## GEORGE E. FRAZER, LL.B., C.P.A.

Member of the Firm of Frazer and Torbet, Certified Public Accountants  
Formerly General Auditor, Montgomery Ward & Company, Chicago  
Formerly Lecturer in Accounting and Finance, The University of Chicago

## AUTHORS AND COLLABORATORS—CONTINUED

WILLARD J. GRAHAM, A.M., Ph.D., C.P.A.

Professor of Accounting, School of Business, and Director of Business Studies  
in University College, The University of Chicago  
Associate, American Institute of Accountants

GLENN M. HOBBS, B.S. Ph.D.

With W. M. Welch Manufacturing Company  
Formerly Executive Director, University of Illinois Foundation  
Fellow, American Association for Advancement of Science

JAMES McKINNEY

President, American School, Chicago  
Vice-President, American Technical Society  
Formerly Field Director, Education and Training Section, Emergency  
Fleet Corporation  
Formerly Assistant Professor of Industrial Education, University of Illinois

JAMES O. McKINSEY, A.M., LL.B., C.P.A.

Author of *Budgetary Control, Managerial Accounting, Financial Management*  
Late Former Professor of Business Policies, The University of Chicago  
Late Former Chairman of the Board of Directors, Marshall Field and Company

THOMAS C. ROBINSON, B.S.

Agricultural Statistician, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department  
of Agriculture  
Author of *Practical Statistics*

EARL A. SALIERS, B.S., A.M., Ph.D., C.P.A.

Professor of Accounting and Head of the Accounting Department, Louisiana  
State University  
Member of American Accounting Association and the American Institute of  
Accountants  
Author of *Principles of Depreciation, Financial Statements Made Plain,*  
*Accounts in Theory and in Practice, Handbook of Corporate Management*  
*and Procedure, Modern Practical Accounting*

JOHN L. SCOTT

Director of Advertising, G. D. Searle & Company, Chicago  
Formerly Editor of *The Printing Art Quarterly*  
Formerly Managing Editor of *American Business*

A. M. SIMONS, B.L.

With Bureau of Medical Economics, American Medical Association  
Formerly Lecturer on Personnel Relations, University of Wisconsin  
Author of *Personnel Relations in Industry, Production Management*

MAY WOOD-SIMONS, Ph.B., M.A., Ph.D.

Author of the *Wisconsin Citizens Handbook, Everyday Problems*  
*in Economics, Woman and the Social Problem*  
Formerly Instructor of Economics, Northwestern University  
Member, American Economics Association and the Royal Economical Society  
(Britain)

LUCIUS I. WIGHTMAN, E.E., M.E.

Industrial Counsel for Advertising, Sales Distribution, Products, Product Design,  
and Markers, at Gales Ferry, Connecticut  
Formerly Advertising Manager, Ingersoll-Rand Company

## AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

THE editors have freely consulted the standard technical and business literature of America in the preparation of these volumes. They desire to express their indebtedness particularly to the following eminent authorities, whose well-known treatises should be in the library of everyone interested in modern business methods.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of the valuable service rendered by the many manufacturers and specialists in office and factory methods, whose cooperation has made it possible to include in these volumes suitable illustrations of the latest equipment for office use. Acknowledgment is also made to those financial, mercantile, and manufacturing concerns who have supplied illustrations of offices, factories, and shops, typical of the commercial and industrial life of America.

### ROGER WARD BABSON, B.S., LL.D.

Chairman of the Board, Babson's Reports, Inc.  
Founder, Babson's Statistical Organization and Babson Institute  
Author of *Twenty Ways to Save Money*, *Consumer Protection*, *Business Barometers*, *Business and Investing Fundamentals*

### ROBERT JOSEPH BENNETT, C.P.A.

Author of *Corporation Organization and Accounting*  
Co-author of *Corporation Procedure*

### WILLARD COPE BRINTON, S.B.

President and Treasurer, Terminal Engineering Company, Lawrence Safety Brake Company, New York  
Author of *Graphic Presentation*, *Graphic Methods for Presenting Facts*  
Member of American Society of Mechanical Engineers, American Statistical Society, Harvard Engineering Society of New York

### STUART CHASE, S.B.

Author of *Where Does the Money Come From? A Primer of Economics*, *Idle Money*, *Idle Men*, *Economy of Abundance*, *Men and Machines*  
Formerly with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Tennessee Valley Authority

### PAUL DELANEY CONVERSE, A.M.

Professor of Business Organization and Operation, University of Illinois  
Author of *Elements of Marketing*

## AUTHORITIES CONSULTED—CONTINUED

### ARTHUR STONE DEWING, A.M., Ph.D.

President, White Mountain Water Company, Portland Water Company, Jewett City Water Company, Chatham Water Company, Hazardville Water Company  
Author of *The Corporation—A Study of Its Financial Structure, Corporation Finance, Financial Policy of Corporations*  
Director of Consolidated Biscuit Company, Barnstable Water Company

### EDWARD A. DUDDY, A.M.

Professor of Marketing, School of Business, The University of Chicago  
Author of *Business Correspondence, Materials for the Study of Business*

### PAUL HOWARD DOUGLAS, A.M., Ph.D.

Professor of Industrial Relations, The University of Chicago  
Author of *The Theory of Wages, Controlling Depressions, Social Security in the United States, Real Wages in the United States*  
Member of American Economic Association, American Statistical Association

### HARRY ANSON FINNEY, Ph.B., C.P.A.

Member of the Firm of Baumann, Finney & Co., Chicago  
Professor of Accounting, Northwestern University  
Author of *General Accounting, Introduction to Principles of Accounting, Consolidated Statements, Principles of Accounting*  
Member of American Institute of Accountants

### IRVING FISHER, Ph.D.

Former Professor of Political Economy, Yale University  
Director and Member of Executive Committee, Remington Rand, Incorporated  
Author of *Booms and Depressions, Stable Money, a History of the Movement, Stabilizing the Dollar, The Making of Index Numbers, The Theory of Interest*

### CHARLES W. GERSTENBERG, LL.B., J.D.

Professor of Constitutional Law, St. Lawrence University  
Author of *American Constitutional Law, Financial Organization and Management*  
Member of American Economic Association, American Statistical Association

### FRANK BUNKER GILBRETH

Author of *Fatigue Study*  
Formerly Consulting Management Engineer  
Member of American Society of Mechanical Engineers

### GEORGE CARTER HARRISON

Fellow, Institute of Management  
Author of *Standard Costs, Cost Accounting to Aid Production*

### JOHN THOM. HOLDSWORTH, A.B., Ph.D.

Professor of Economics, University of Miami  
Member, American Economic Association  
Author of *Money and Banking*

### ROY BERNARD KESTER, M.A., Ph.D., C.P.A.

Professor of Accounting, School of Business, Columbia University  
Author of *Principles of Accounting, Accounting Applications in Business and Industry, Accounting Theory and Practice*  
Member of American Institute of Accountants, National Association of Cost Accountants, American Accounting Association

## AUTHORITIES CONSULTED—CONTINUED

### FORREST A. KINGSBURY, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Psychology and Student Counselor, The University  
of Chicago  
Co-author of *Psychological Tests in Business*

### LEVERETT S. LYON, LL.B., M.A., Ph.D.

Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Association of Commerce  
Member, American Economic Association, Academy of Political Science, and  
American Statistical Association  
Author of *Education for Business, Salesmen in Marketing Strategy,*  
*Advertising Allowances, Government and Economic Life*

### LEON CARROLL MARSHALL, A.M., LL.D.

Professor of Political Economy, American University  
Formerly Visiting Professor of Education, Johns Hopkins University  
Associate Editor, *Journal of Political Economy*  
Author of *Curriculum Making in the Social Studies, Readings in Industrial*  
*Society, Business Administration, The National Recovery Administration—*  
*An Analysis and Appraisal*

### WESLEY CLAIR MITCHELL, Ph.D., LL.D., D.Sc.

Professor of Economics, Columbia University  
Past President, American Economic Association  
Fellow, American Statistical Association  
Author of *Business Cycles: The Problem and Its Setting, The Backward*  
*Art of Spending Money, A History of the Greenbacks*  
Co-author of *Recent Economic Changes, Income in the United States*

### ROBERT H. MONTGOMERY, LL.D., C.P.A.

Member of the Firm of Lybrand, Ross Bros. & Montgomery  
Formerly Member of Board, School of Business, Columbia University  
Author of *Excess Profits and Other Federal Taxes on Corporations,*  
*Federal Tax Handbook Supplement, Financial Handbook, Income Tax Procedure*  
Past President of American Association of Accountants  
Member of American Economic Association and American Institute of Accountants

### HAROLD GLENN MOULTON, LL.D., Ph.D.

President of the Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C.  
Author of *Capital Expansion, Employment, and Economic Stability, The Recovery*  
*Problem in the United States, The Financial Organization of Society*

### PAUL HENRY NYSTROM, Ph.B., Ph.M., Ph.D.

Professor of Marketing, Columbia University  
Consultant in Business and Marketing  
Past President of the American Marketing Society  
Author of *Retail Store Operation, The Economics of Consumption,*  
*Economics of Retailing*

### WILLIAM ANDREW PATON, A.M., Ph.D., C.P.A.

Professor of Economics and Accounting, University of Michigan  
Member, American Economic Association, Society of Certified Public Accountants,  
American Institute of Accountants  
Editor and Principal Contributor, *Accountant's Handbook*  
Author of *An Introduction to Corporate Accounting Standards, Advanced*  
*Accounting, Accounting Theory*

## AUTHORITIES CONSULTED—CONTINUED

### WARREN MILTON PERSONS, B.S.

Member of the Firm of Warren M. Persons and Associates, Consultants in  
Applied Economics, New York  
Fellow, American Statistical Association, Member, American Economic  
Association  
Author of *The Construction of Index Numbers, Forecasting Business Conditions,*  
*Indices of Business Conditions*

### ROSCOE POUND, A.M., Ph.D., LL.M., LL.D., J.U.D.

Formerly Carter Professor of Jurisprudence, Harvard University  
Fellow, American Association for Advancement of Science, American Bar Association  
Author of *Appellate Procedure in Civil Cases, Law and Morals,*  
*Administrative Law, The Spirit of the Common Law*

### H. W. QUAINANCE, LL.B., Ph.D.

Formerly Head of the Department of Accounting and Business Administration,  
American School

### CLARENCE RUFUS ROREM, A.M., Ph.D., C.P.A., LL.D.

Chairman, Committee on Welfare Accounting, American Public Welfare Association  
Consultant to Federal Security Board  
Director of Committee on Hospital Service, American Hospital Association, Chicago  
Member, American Economic Association  
Author of *Accounting Method, Hospital Care in the Family Budget*

### WALTER DILL SCOTT, LL.D., Ph.D.

President Emeritus of Northwestern University  
Author of *Influencing Men in Business, Increasing Human Efficiency in Business,*  
*Psychology of Advertising in Theory and Practice, Personnel Management*

### WILLIAM HOMER SPENCER, Ph.B., J.D.

Professor of Government and Business, The University of Chicago  
Author of *Casebook of Law and Business, A Textbook on Law and*  
*Business, Law and Business, The National Labor Relations Act*

### FREDERICK WINSLOW TAYLOR, M.E., Sc.D.

Past President of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers  
Author of *Shop Management, Scientific Management in American Industry,*  
*The Principles of Scientific Management*

### ORDWAY TEAD, A.B.

Editor of Economic and Business Books, Harper & Bros., Director, Harper & Bros.  
Member of the American Economic Association, Association for Labor-Legislation  
Author of *New Adventures in Democracy, Human Nature and Management*

### PAUL M. WARBURG

Formerly Member, Federal Reserve Board

### H. PARKER WILLIS, Ph.D., LL.D.

Professor of Banking, Columbia University  
Formerly Editor-in-Chief, *New York Journal of Commerce*  
Author of *The Federal Reserve System*  
Co-Author of *Foreign Banking Systems, Investment Banking, Federal Reserve*  
*Banking Practice*

# FOREWORD

**M**ODERN business places a high premium on the trained man. Of the thousands who knock each year at the portals of our commercial enterprises, the applicant with a backlog of sound training is in greatest demand.

On the job, he has a better chance for promotion than the untrained worker, because his preparation gives him a knowledge of the broad fundamentals of successful business operation.

The road to executive leadership and success in business begins with good training. All commercial and business enterprises, large and small, are governed by certain basic principles. Today's businessman must analyze his problems with intelligence and knowledge, based on an intimate understanding of these fundamentals. He must have a grasp of the whole operation of a business as well as the inter-relation of its parts.

How does he come into possession of such knowledge? Eventually by experience, yes. But he seldom gets the chance to acquire that experience without previous preparation. Such preparation can come either through study or apprenticeship, but usually it is a combination of both.

However, the great growth of business and industry, reaching new heights of expansion during World War II, has made for further specialization in the duties of business executives and subordinates. Thus it has become impossible to get apprentice experience in the numerous departments of an organization without spending long years.

Modern methods of business training have evolved sound and tested short cuts to executive leadership and business independence. A carefully planned program of study offers effective means of acquiring such training.

In the past, the man who desired to acquire this knowledge found himself wasting valuable time. For one thing, good reading material was so scattered that blind selection of textbooks was unavoidable. As a result, much duplication of



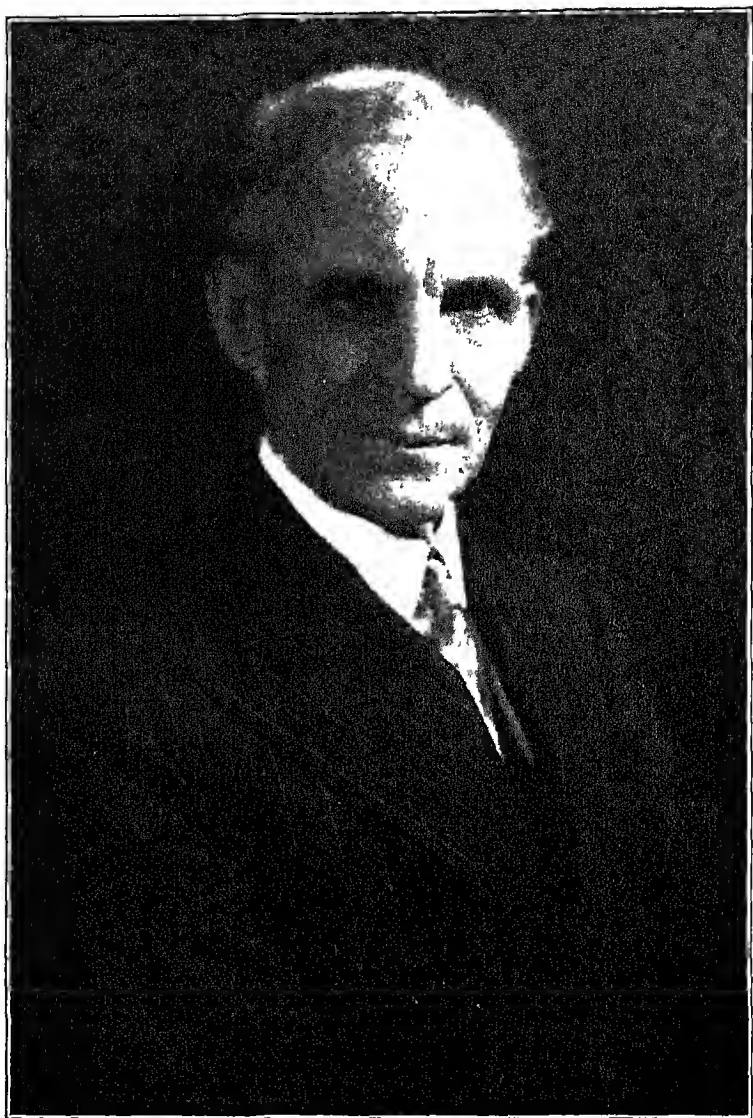
reading and important omissions gave him too much of some subjects and too little of others.

In order to offer in co-ordinated, organized form, a complete series on training for business leadership, the American Technical Society prepared this set on Practical Business Administration. Through eight editions and numerous re-printings, we have revised and added to the original texts to meet the specific needs of today's business trainee and executive.

The present set combines the collective judgment of outstanding authorities with their accumulated years of practical experience in specialized fields. Thousands already have found this set to be their first step toward successful business careers.

Prepared primarily for those who engage in independent home study, these books have been written at the college level for high-school graduates who aspire to executive positions. The style of writing is simple and readable; the lesson contents clear and comprehensive.

The businessman hard pressed for time, the fact-seeking citizen wanting the know-how of business, and the student for whom this set has been prepared primarily—all find in these books a wide range of practical knowledge and a wealth of factual material about the world of business.



#### HENRY FORD

He started as a mechanic and became chief engineer of the Edson Illuminating Company. In 1903, when he was already 40 years old, he launched a new venture, the Ford Motor Company. By initiating new methods of organization and production, he revolutionized the infant automobile industry and became at one time the largest car manufacturer in the world, with 100,000 employees. The vast Ford industrial empire is now headed by its third president, Henry Ford II, grandson of the founder.

*Courtesy of Ford Motor Company*

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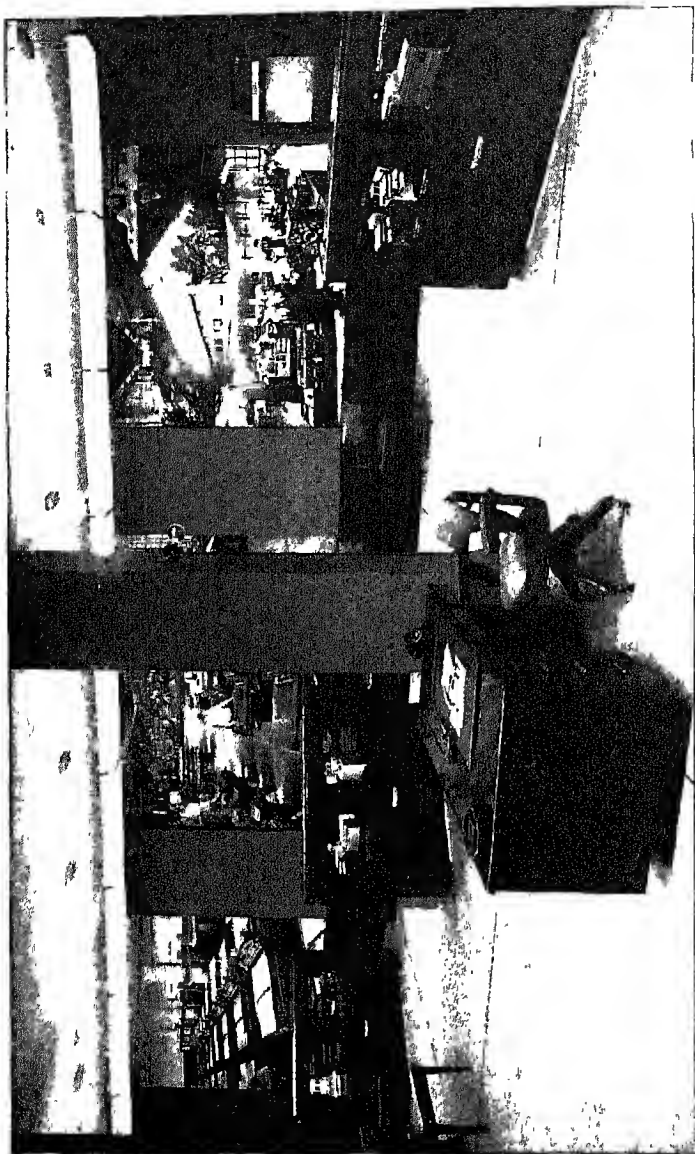
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### THE MODERN SALES SHOWROOM

Combining skillful use of visual material with pleasing and effective lay out, this showroom of a printing equipment firm offers a striking example of good display technique.

*Courtesy of Vandercook & Sons*

# INTRODUCTION

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## WHY STUDY RETAIL SELLING?

**Introduction.** In 1939 there were about six and a half million people engaged in retail store activities in the United States. It is estimated that over 250,000 persons enter the distributive occupations every year. In view of the magnitude of this field, it is not surprising that there is much interest in it at the present time. Nor is it strange that there should be emphasis on training for this form of marketing.

In studying any subject the individual may gain from the experiences of those who have worked or are now working in the field of his interest. In this way many fundamentals that ordinarily take long to learn can be learned in a short period of time. Study is therefore economical from the standpoint of time.

Some subjects, such as carpentry or domestic science, are studied mainly for the job training they give. Others, such as the liberal arts, are more general, although they contain values which later are found to be quite helpful in one's work. A course in retail selling is primarily vocational; that is, it endeavors to assist the student in preparing for specific work. It does, however, have usefulness beyond its primary purpose. Increased emphasis is being placed at the present time on training for store positions. Any discussion of training would be incomplete without consideration of the growing consumer movement which is adding to the knowledge buyers are now able to apply in making purchases. This, in turn, makes it imperative that the quality of retail salesmanship be improved.

**The Influence of Consumer Education.** Salespeople who are to keep pace with late developments and trends in retail selling must know a great deal about customers, the sales process, and merchandise.

Consumers are better informed than ever before. Women's clubs and magazines, schools, various governmental agencies, and stores steadily contribute to consumer awareness. Careful labeling and

directions for the care of goods are being regularly provided in answer to consumer demand for merchandise information.

It is admitted that a sale is not successful unless the buyer receives value in proportion to the amount he spends.

The following quotation well expresses the significance of consumer education and the part the salesperson plays in it:

"There are many other evidences that consumer education has advanced greatly within the last few years. A comparison of today's newspaper advertising with even that of a year ago emphasizes this point. The wealth of material published in books, pamphlet, or article form, and the many publications of government, private, and commercial agencies, along the lines of better buying illustrate that studies have been made. All of these are helpful and, with time and study, create for an individual a background of facts which are an invaluable aid to wise buying. The most important contribution to judicious spending of money, however, is the help that the salesperson can give. She holds in her hand the power to satisfy or disappoint customers and it has been well said that the people who serve us in the store can be classified into three groups: *Order takers*, who are merely interested in filling out saleschecks; *clerks*, who specialize on the store leaders and hope not to be bothered any further; and *salespeople*, who handle each customer as an individual and try to find out what it is she wants and how best to fill that need. Salespeople, as here classified, know their merchandise. They are qualified to answer customer inquiries on the use and care of the article and they know how to apply merchandise to customer requirements. This ability is acquired through the sales training given them and through self-development of a natural aptitude for serving effectively."<sup>1</sup>

Is this not an opportunity and a challenge to the young person who aspires to enter retailing? The nature of retail selling makes it necessary that many employees deal directly with the public. In most other lines of business only persons holding executive positions contact the public. Therefore, the success of a store is vitally connected with the efficiency and courteousness of employees.

Let us now examine other features of this subject which are worth while to the student.

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<sup>1</sup> Leone Ann Heuer, "Two Consumers Look at Sales Training," *The Bulletin*, National Retail Dry Goods Association, November, 1931, p. 18.

**The Student as a Consumer.** An interesting outcome of this study is that, aside from the vocational values received, the student becomes a more intelligent buyer. Two chapters of this book are devoted to textiles, one to non-textiles, and another to helps in investigating merchandise, including carefully selected references in each case.

**Other Values.** Often a student is undecided as to what business or profession to follow. He may investigate many occupations to determine the possibilities each offers for a career. In view of this, it is well for a study course to be worth while from a vocational standpoint and have implications of general worth as well. Some of the general values in this study of retail selling are:

*Fundamental Marketing Information.* Getting goods from the producer to the consumer should be generally understood, since we are all consumers.

*Study of Personality Traits.* Obviously, the cultivation of desirable traits and habits is important to workers in every field of endeavor.

*Sales Psychology.* This study teaches selling appeals and indicates buying motives. It is clear that study alone cannot make one proficient in the art of understanding people and pleasing them. Study accompanied by reflection and experience over a period of time, however, does grant the possibility that one may become increasingly effective in dealing with others.

*Supplementary Education.* Comment is often heard about the need for improvement in grammar and arithmetic among salespeople and others who are in contact with the public. The opportunity to supplement one's knowledge of these subjects is offered in this text.

*Employment.* The final chapter discusses the procedures involved in endeavoring to secure a position.





**A CORPS OF SEVERAL HUNDRED GIRLS "WAIT ON" THE "CORRESPONDENT CUSTOMERS" OF A LARGE NEW YORK STORE**  
*Courtesy of Agence Photo*

# EFFECTIVE RETAIL SELLING

## CHAPTER I

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### RETAIL SELLING AS AN OCCUPATION

The importance of the retail function in the United States is attested by the number of retail establishments and their annual business volume. According to the Census of Business, Retail Distribution, in 1939 there were 1,770,355 retail outlets. These stores had a gross sales volume for that year of \$42,041,790,000. Obviously, no stretch of the imagination is necessary to see that these companies not only provide many with a livelihood (over 3,700,000 people in stores alone) but that for a certain number of select individuals there is an opportunity for a brilliant merchandising career.

The aim in this chapter is to give general information that will be helpful and of interest to students who are planning to enter store work. This material is also designed to aid those whose purpose in studying this is to find out more about retailing as an occupation.

Among the topics discussed are methods of preparation for retailing, the junior positions, and opportunities in various stores.

**Characteristics of Retail Occupations.** Retailing has certain definite advantages over many other lines of industry. The decrease in total sales volume during the depression which began in 1929 was, to no small extent, accounted for by the decline in selling prices. Though cash received decreased, the number of sales did not drop as much as might be thought. Since store employment and transactions are related, this condition is of consequence to retailing employees. It is logical to believe that retail occupations are less affected by curtailed business activity than are many other lines.

Another point to consider in retailing is the fact that there is less chance for the services of the worker to be displaced by the use of machines. Retail selling and related activities are primarily service occupations. Though we hear today of some organizations who are

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<sup>1</sup> See Nathan M. Ohrbach, *Getting Ahead in Retailing* (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1935), pp. 3-5.

selling almost entirely on a price basis with little service, there are many people who regard service as indispensable. In the sale of staple items it may be possible to keep service at a minimum, but the nature of some merchandise makes this impossible. In fact, in a large number of stores the stress will undoubtedly be on better-trained employees who can give greater and better service. It is rather generally conceded that this is fundamental. Herein lies opportunity for the well-trained worker.

Processes of manufacturing and production have received earnest attention for a long time. Our productive activities are generally regarded as having reached a high degree of effectiveness. Distribution of goods, of which retailing is an important part, has not received the same attention. Progress has been made but distributive costs are unavoidably high. This is a challenge to the young person who aspires to do things that are worth while. Of course, to be in a position to make improvements involves a long period of apprenticeship in addition to thorough training.

Retailing, more than most other businesses, offers the individual the opportunity eventually to operate his own business. Though it is true that we are living in a period where large-scale retailing is being carried on, there are still possibilities for the smaller store which is efficiently operated. This fact should prove inviting to many.

Some of the outstanding elements necessary for success are:

**Knowledge of People.** Understanding is necessary to sympathetic relationship. This faculty is an art and requires constant study (either formal or otherwise), analysis, and long experience. It involves reading articles and books on applied psychology and salesmanship. Such study is not only fascinating but profitable.

**Knowledge of Merchandise.** Recently, in discussing retail selling with a man of wide experience in handling retail salespeople, one of his first observations was of the need for knowledge of merchandise among store workers and proper application of that knowledge. Retail selling is not something mysterious but rather the application of principles that can be mastered by anyone of average intelligence. One of the chief difficulties seems to be the lack of constant and alert, yet confident, application of information about goods.

Merchandise information can be gained in a number of ways. This will be given careful consideration later in the book.

**Knowledge of Retailing and the Particular Store in Which One Is Employed.** For immediate success the salesperson must know store system. An important part of store system to the salesperson is the preparation of saleschecks. Various kinds of checks are necessary for different kinds of sales. The larger stores usually give the salesperson initial training in the proper procedure for preparing saleschecks before going on the selling floor. The salesperson who understands the great need for accuracy in saleschecks from the standpoint of customer satisfaction and for control will desire to be accurate.

For ultimate promotion and success, too much cannot be known about the store in which one is employed, nor about the principles followed by all capably operated retail institutions.

**Analysis of Methods.** Everyone makes mistakes, but those who advance surely endeavor not to repeat them. Dale Carnegie in his book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, tells the story of a successful man who had little formal education, who each Saturday night reviewed his doings of the business week just elapsed. Though his review did not always make him happy, it did have the effect of aiding him in meeting future situations.

In self-analysis of your traits and activities, however, do not brood on the errors you have made. One must not become what the psychologist calls an introvert. This type of person is too much centered in his thoughts and self. In other words, analyze but do not worry. Determine to profit by past mistakes.

**Demand for People in the Distributive Occupations.** It is estimated that the number of people entering the distributive occupations each year who have not previously been engaged in such work numbers 250,000 to 300,000.

Many of our high school graduates and other young people are entering this field without training in retail selling and closely related subjects. Does it not seem logical to you that chances for success would be greater with special training?

**Educational Preparation for Retail Selling.** The salesperson should have good educational preparation. In dealing with many people, insufficient preparation is bound to be reflected and cause lack of confidence. It cannot be overemphasized that confidence is a vital factor in selling. The preparation we are considering may be secured in many ways which we shall cover.

**General Education.** Many times the student of retail selling feels that general education is not as valuable as more specific training in salesmanship and is impatient to take "short cuts" to arrive at a desired goal. He fails to recognize what those responsible for his education have tried or are now trying to do. Is not training for life also valuable for business?

Business in many cases is or will be an important part of your life. Do you not recognize the fact that many of the so-called general subjects are quite necessary for your success? It is urged strongly that the prospective salesperson acquire good general training. If it is not possible to do this in a formal way, wise and extensive reading will go a long way toward eliminating a feeling of inadequacy.

Concerning retail selling more directly, it should be kept in mind that proper training, however acquired, is reflected in dealing with others. If this reflection is favorable, confidence, which is so essential in this work, can be built up in such a way as to increase success. Customers are personalities with widely varying interests. This means that the salesperson must be adaptable. Adaptability is acquired through understanding and intelligence.

**English and Arithmetic.** Good English is a great asset for the salesperson. Good English reflects training, education, and culture. We shall discuss this phase of retail selling more thoroughly later.

Arithmetic is also especially needed by salespeople. It is not implied that the salesperson must know mathematics in its more difficult forms. But it is implied that the salesperson should know the application of simple arithmetic and be able to avoid errors which might cause embarrassment and confusion. This also is considered of sufficient importance to warrant more thorough and careful treatment in a later chapter.

**High School Selling Courses.** In a number of high schools throughout the country courses in selling have been introduced. In many instances the school cooperates with retailers by allowing students to work in stores while pursuing their retailing study courses. Where this is not feasible the students are encouraged to secure part-time work in order to apply their training. Getting experience while studying is an excellent idea. The ideal in education in vocational subjects, of which retail selling is one, is the combination of theory and practice. Students of this book are urged, whenever they can,

to become associated with stores in order to apply the principles they have learned. Salary is of secondary importance during this training period. Many men and women who have risen to responsible positions have made humble beginnings.

The following chart summarizes the views of the teachers and coordinators:

**Aims of cooperative training in retail selling, with ranks assigned by 56 teachers and coordinators of the subject**

Aim	Rank and Frequency								Total	Average Rank	Final Rank
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
a. To prepare students to enter the profession of retailing.....	17	5	3						25	1.44	1
b. To give students insights into scientific laws and methods of retailing.....	12	6	3						21	1.57	2
c. To help pupil find out for what field he is best fitted and acquaint him with this field.....	3	3	1						7	1.71	3
d. To prepare students to meet and work with people successfully.....	3	7	4		1		1		16	2.56	4
e. To develop in pupils an understanding of business ethics.....		1	3	1					5	3.00	5
f. To give such training as will bring promotion to the pupil in this field.....		2	2	2					6	3.00	6
g. To impress upon the pupil the social importance of work in this field.....	1		1	2					4	3.00	7
h. To develop the personality and character of the pupil.....	3	3	3	4		1		1	15	3.20	8
i. To prepare students to be better buyers.....		2	4	3	2	1		1	14	3.85	9
Other aims suggested by teachers and coordinators:											
1. To aid pupil in earning money enough to continue school.....		1	1	1					3	3.00	.....
2. To give the pupil a general understanding of business organization.....	1			1					2	2.50	.....
3. To give the pupils a general knowledge of merchandise.....		1	1						2	2.50	.....
4. To make an easy adjustment for students from school to working contacts.....	1	1							2	1.50	.....
5. To coordinate the needs of the employers with the offerings of the schools.....			1						1	3.00	.....
6. To develop on the part of the students a sense of responsibility.....			1						1	3.00	.....
7. To encourage savings in order that student may enter business.....			1						1	3.00	.....
8. To provide the pupil with a well-rounded education.....	1	1							2	1.50	.....
9. To relieve the store of training pupil.....	1								1	1.00	.....
10. To provide the student with a market-distribution background.....	1								1	1.00	.....
11. To provide the pupil with practical experience on the job.....	1								1	1.00	.....
12. To train those who can profit by training.....	1								1	1.00	.....

EXPLANATION.—The number in the columns following the aim given, indicates the number of times the aim was listed—first, second, etc.—by the various teachers and coordinators.

In connection with high school courses in retail selling, the opinions of teachers and coordinators of the subject will be interesting to

the student. The aims given in the chart<sup>1</sup> were indicated primarily for courses in retailing where the school cooperated with business concerns by having the students spend time selling in stores. Most of them, however, will apply to courses in which the student is studying retail selling without the cooperative feature. If the student makes his own contacts for part-time employment, this will make the aims given still more applicable. Though these aims were ascertained primarily for teachers there is reason to believe that students, since they are vitally concerned, should be greatly interested. Knowing the aims of those responsible for planning the courses will give the student more insight into the purpose of study and should motivate endeavor on his part.

It should be noted from the foregoing chart that though preparation of students to enter the profession of retailing led, there were others considered by many to be significant. Other aims were listed by at least one teacher or coordinator and would seem to be indirectly if not specifically valuable to the student of retail selling.

The student should consider seriously his fitness for retail selling. Study the qualities necessary for success given in the chapter which deals with desirable qualities of retail salespeople. Do you have these qualities or can you develop them? Retailing requires intelligence and positive characteristics regardless of the fact that we sometimes encounter those who are not aware that such is the case. Stores are more likely to consider favorably the applicant who knows what he wants to do and who also has had preliminary training which should aid his progress.

**Correspondence Courses.** Courses by correspondence have been the answer to the need and desire of many for additional training. It has been proved by experience that instruction can be effectively given by this means. One decided advantage of correspondence study is that the student must actually master the course. His work on every phase of the subject is checked carefully, while in class work there is the possibility that some phases may be less thoroughly learned and yet credit received for the course.

Correspondence work requires that the student have will power and determination to accomplish a goal. The number of students

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn Oscar Emick, *Cooperative Training in Retail Selling in the Public Secondary Schools*, U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Vocational Education Bulletin, No. 188 (1936), p. 24.

finishing work by correspondence shows that it can be done. Many firms look with favor upon students who have taken correspondence courses not only because of the gain in knowledge of principles but because of the initiative displayed in completing such courses.

The student who is engaged in business can arrange his study by correspondence for his spare time. This is another decided advantage of correspondence work. Many people supplement their education with home study courses. Nearly everyone numbers among his acquaintances one or more persons who have acquired training by this method. Leading schools of the country offer correspondence courses in diversified fields.

**College and University Courses.** A number of our leading colleges and universities are offering courses in the field of retailing. The Prince School of Store Service Education, New York University, and the University of Pittsburgh, have specialized in this field. These institutions are stressing participation of the student in retailing while learning its principles.

Many other institutions are taking an active interest in training in this field. In the Chicago area, Loyola University, De Paul University, The Y. M. C. A. College, the University of Chicago, and Northwestern University are among those offering courses in this field in their evening schools. This idea is excellent for the worker who cannot attend school during the day.

Recently announcement was made that twelve major executives from leading retail institutions will compose an advisory committee to guide the policy of the retailing study program of the School of Commerce of Northwestern University. In some instances students work in cooperating stores while studying. The cooperation of business houses with educational institutions in projects of this kind should vastly improve training for retailing by making it more practical. This will serve as an example of a trend.

Institutions in many other parts of the country are also offering evening courses in this field. Since there are so many opportunities available, those in retailing can plan for thorough training. Though it is true that the college does not make the person, it does help. Many business firms are now looking with favor upon college training for retailing. The trend indicates that college training will undoubtedly be even more important with the passing of time.



In this connection it is interesting to note what a well-known educator wrote about retail salesmanship. The following quotation is taken from a recent article written by the Chancellor of New York University dealing with opportunities for youth under the conditions of today:

Shaped by the necessities of the age, a whole series of new "frontier professions" are developing. For example: a generation ago, nobody had the idea that retail salesmanship—"clerking" as it was then called—offered a promising career for ambitious young people. Today I know a university which has developed in cooperation with a group of merchants, a graduate school of retailing which enrolls some 160 students from all over the United States. All these young men and women are college graduates; all of them work for a year part time in the classroom and part time in cooperative stores. This school has no difficulty placing its students. They rise rapidly to executive positions because they are carefully chosen and trained for a satisfying career.<sup>1</sup>

**Study on the Job.** Though directed study is without question more effective, the salesperson should not overlook the value of independent study. Libraries have material which has been prepared for the student of selling and retailing. For example, study can be carried on which will aid the student in knowing merchandise. New books are prepared from time to time which indicate trends and give broad information. Books on applied psychology may be used in studying people, a study fascinating and valuable to the retail salesperson.

Organizations such as the National Retail Dry Goods Association and the National Association of Retail Grocers have valuable material for study.

Trade Journals offer helpful and practical information. Attendance at the conferences of retail associations present another opportunity for the broadening of knowledge.

**Opportunities in Retailing.** The proper preparation for store selling has been considered. It would be well now to direct our attention to opportunities in retailing. Though this book is concerned primarily with retail selling, the fact should not be overlooked that selling is the stepping stone to many positions in the store. This is bound to be true since selling is of utmost importance to the success of the store and knowledge of its principles and their application are fundamental.

<sup>1</sup> Harry Woodburn Chase, "New Frontiers for Youth," *The Reader's Digest*, June, 1937, p. 24.

**Opportunities in the Department Store.** Retail selling furnishes experience and a background which is helpful in other positions within the department store. In many department stores an appreciable percentage of the executives started on the selling floor. Though this is especially true in cases of the buyers and merchandise managers it is also true for other executives. Those in the personnel and publicity divisions have in many cases had their initial contact with retailing by selling. In fact there are many places other than those mentioned where a selling background is invaluable. Of course, the junior positions, many of which lead to selling, also present opportunities.

**Junior Positions in the Department Store.** There are certain positions in the store which are filled usually by young workers. These positions offer chance for advancement to better positions, among which are selling. In some of these positions there is considerable contact with older, and, in some cases, supervising employees. Thus the junior position is an opening wedge to something better. Viewed in this way the position is more meaningful. The beginning worker should strive consistently to learn everything possible not only concerning his present job but also respecting positions which are more advanced. The junior employee who supplements his initial experience with outside training is likely to make rapid progress in his own particular field.

*Stock Boy or Stock Girl.* This employee arranges stock and distributes it to the sales floor as it is needed.

In some instances quantities of incoming merchandise and its condition are checked by stockroom workers. Also, goods may be arranged by them on display counters or racks under the careful supervision of others.

Cleaning and dusting of stock and the stockroom may comprise part of the duties assigned.

Assisting in checking merchandise is a task of importance.

The stock girl who works in apparel sections aids in caring for women's garments and keeps them in order on racks on the sales floor and in the stockroom. She may make small repairs and keep records of items carried. In connection with this position there are often miscellaneous duties such as running errands and moving stock from counter to counter. She may be given an opportunity to wait upon customers during rush periods.

It is possible to gain promotion to other positions, among which may be selling. Stock experience has been found to be helpful and executives seem to think well of this kind of experience as a background.<sup>1</sup>

*The Marker.* This work involves printing and placing price tags on merchandise. The tags may be printed by hand, have information stamped upon them, or be prepared by machine. They may be fastened to goods by sewing, stapling, clipping, pinning, or gluing.

After merchandise is marked it may be packed in boxes for delivery to selling departments. Often it is necessary to re-mark goods because of price changes. Much of this work is done by machines. The setting of type for machines used in marking price tags requires considerable skill.

Promotion to a selling job from marking is possible.

*Inspectors and Wrappers.* Usually this work is done by girls. They are likely to have the responsibility of inspecting saleschecks to see that the merchandise delivered corresponds to that sold and to see that the date, price, and other details are correct.

It may be necessary for the inspector to call the credit office before releasing merchandise that is charged. Among her duties is the wrapping of packages. If they are to be delivered she sends them to the shipping department.

In handling cash sales she hands the salesperson the change and the package to be given the customer.

Promotion from this position may be to that of selling.

*Errand Boy.* This work will probably include the delivering of packages within or outside the store. A knowledge of the city may be necessary for outside special deliveries. The errand boy may be entrusted with money received in payment for merchandise.

Miscellaneous duties such as arranging stock, sweeping floors, and running errands may take up a considerable part of this worker's time. He will have an opportunity to learn a great deal about the organization in which he is employed and to meet many people including supervisors. Selling may be the next step forward from this job.

<sup>1</sup> *Job Descriptions for the Retail Trade*, United States Employment Service, Division of Standards and Research, April, 1933. (This material was helpful in preparing the other job descriptions that follow in this chapter.)

*The Cashier.* This employee has the responsibility of handling money and is often required to furnish bond. She may keep simple records of cash sales and payments. A knowledge of typing may be helpful in preparing monthly statements. Speed and accuracy are required. Bills may be paid and cash may be received and credit forms receipted by the cashier.

Promotion from this position is likely to be to one requiring clerical skill, though this is not always true. It may be followed by sales work.

**Desirability of Selling as a Background.** Some students feel that they could just as well get their experience in some way other than selling. It is the opinion of many, however, that there is no substitute for facing the customer and learning through various situations that arise. For example, since the buyer supervises selling it is doubtful if he or she can acquire the proper information and viewpoint without actual customer contact. Through sales contacts the buyer learns the customer's wants better than in any other way. This is invaluable when he is in the market buying, as it enables him to visualize existing wants. If the buyer dislikes selling, it is logical to assume that proper supervision of others doing this work will be difficult.

**Chance for Promotion in the Merchandise Division.** Retail salespeople who acquaint themselves thoroughly with merchandise may be placed in charge of the ordering of specific stock or, where merchandise is not too diversified, may be made head of stock. This is the first step upward.

*The Assistant Buyer.* The work of the assistant buyer is not easy but, if well done, it presents opportunities for advancement. When the buyer is away the assistant is likely to have charge of the work ordinarily under the buyer's control. Meeting responsibility successfully makes manifest the development necessary for promotion.

Among the duties to be performed may be the arrangement and display of merchandise within the department and the selection of goods for advertising purposes and window display. Salespeople may be aided by helping them to meet unusual situations and by giving them information on unfamiliar lines of merchandise or new features of articles sold under a continuous trade name.

Supervision of the salesforce is important. Being able to get

along with people in a satisfactory manner necessitates tact. An adjusted relationship with the buyer is also required.

Knowing merchandise and its selling appeal is necessary for success. Too, figures on the results of operations must be known and applied.

The assistant takes care of many details that otherwise would be handled by the buyer who will now be considered.

*The Buyer.* The authority and responsibilities of buyers vary with the place of employment, these depending upon the organization and policy of the firm.

Thorough knowledge of merchandise and ability to select items which will sell at a profit are chief qualifications. The total amount of money to be spent is usually restricted, but freedom is allowed within this limit. The buyer assumes responsibility for the salability of the goods selected.

Prices at which the articles purchased are to be marked must be decided. Cost of goods and operating costs of the business, appeal of the article, and competition must all be reckoned with in pricing.

Knowledge of the market as to sources and current conditions is essential. It requires considerable skill to prevent serious losses in periods when market prices are declining. Making price reductions on merchandise at the proper time is another matter that requires judgment.

Familiarity with buying habits of customers is of great advantage, and acquaintance with style and design is of utmost value for successful results.

Department management is an important part of the work along with advertising and display and planning of special sales. The imparting of merchandise information, control of stocks to prevent accumulation of slow-moving items, and general supervision of employees are other duties.

It should be emphasized that the buyer must be an individual of integrity and with single-minded loyalty. Acceptance of favors proffered for the purpose of securing business is not regarded with approval.

**Opportunities in the Chain Store.** What opportunities does the chain store offer the young person who desires to enter the retailing field? It is generally conceded that chain store systems use scientific

management. Small margins of profit make this necessary. Here then is an opportunity for the young worker to be introduced to principles of scientific management from the beginning. Some chain store companies give training courses to new employees who are judged to be material for supervisory positions. Chain store organizations realize that one of the principal factors in their success is efficient and reliable employees.

Chain store organizations desire their employees to have a background of training. A high school education, at least, is desired. Education must be supplemented by hard work and a willingness to start at the bottom.

The young worker usually begins by selling over the counter or working in the stockroom. The next step upward from selling is the position of assistant store manager, or manager. Above the position of store manager is that of district supervisor. From there progress is problematical as there are a number of executive positions which must be filled from time to time. Of course, it takes several years for the apprentice to reach the place in his development where he is placed in charge of a store.

One of the particular advantages of chain store employment seems to be the possibility of rising to the managership of a store. Here the employee obtains good experience even though he manages under the careful direction of supervisors, and often does not do his own buying.

From what has been said it would seem that opportunities for men are greater than for women in certain types of chain stores since usually the managers are men. It should be kept in mind that this applies notably to the chain organizations of the grocery field and not to the chain department store. There are opportunities for supervisory positions other than that of manager in the latter. Also women do have a chance for advancement in chain specialty shops.

**Opportunities in the Small Retail Organization.** As has been pointed out many of our retail institutions today are small. These stores must also have efficient help. In fact, in the case of the smaller store capable salespeople are needed because one of the strongest selling points the small store has is that of service. Building good will is absolutely essential. The worker in the small organization has a chance to gain more general knowledge than is possible in the larger

institution. This is bound to be true since the work is not so specialized.

The small unit store offers various positions for prospective employment.

What has been said about the unit store is true of the independent specialty shop, with the exception that here fewer lines are carried and the salesperson is able to become more specialized in the merchandise handled.

**Opportunities in Independent Ownership.** Although independent ownership usually does not take place for some time after the beginning of active service in retailing, its possibilities should be known by the young worker.

The success in independent ownership varies a great deal. We find many examples of well-conducted, profitable retail businesses that are independently owned. Of course the mortality rate is high. This is to be expected, when we realize that a number of people who undertake retailing are not fitted for it either by training or experience. The individual who opens a store without previous experience and training, either formal or otherwise, is facing a decided risk.

**Important Factors in Small Store Management.** Though this book deals primarily with retail salesmanship, we shall briefly discuss some of the factors of small store management. It is not inferred that the basic points covered apply only to small stores. For the time being, however, the small store is under consideration. This is proper because the employec in the small organization is likely gradually to gain a position that carries some voice in the management. Many employees in small stores have aspirations to become store owners themselves. Those who know some of the fundamentals of successful store management will the sooner be prepared to assume responsibility. The brief remarks that can be devoted to management in a book of this nature should be supplemented by further study in store management as such.

**Personality and Service.** An agreeable personality is the greatest asset a small merchant can have. He should do everything he can to build good will and friendship. The merchant and his employees have the close contact with the customer which affords this opportunity. Pleasantness and a genuine interest on the part of those in the small store should always be in evidence.

Let us think of ourselves for the moment as customers. Why do we not return to certain stores? Why do we repeatedly go to certain stores to purchase goods? Does not that indefinable something which might be termed atmosphere play a large part in our continued patronage? The attitude and interest of those who serve us are large factors in creating confidence, are they not?

A survey to ascertain why customers stopped trading in 1,483 stores showed that 30 per cent were lost because of unsatisfactory salesmanship and an additional 33 per cent because of poor service.<sup>1</sup> Other studies have revealed the importance of the personal element in the evaluation of the store by customers.

It is logical to believe that one of the reasons why people in the smaller communities buy in stores located at a distance from their homes is the fact that some of the small merchants have not taken the fullest advantage of the factors which are being considered. There are many exceptions, to be sure, and where this situation exists it is gradually being recognized and remedied.

Let us repeat that the greatest advantage of the small store is its opportunity for effective personal contact and service. As an employee or owner of a small store keep this thought in mind and act accordingly.

*Location.* Store location is of the utmost importance and has been given much attention by larger organizations. Yet we find in some cases that individuals will start a store in a location where the preceding owner failed without analyzing the cause and instituting means for effecting improvement. Of course, location may not have been the deciding element. However, a location in which a similar type of business preceding present occupancy failed will stand careful investigation.

The most important factor in deciding location is the number of potential customers who pass by the store. This number may or may not be in proportion to the total number of passers-by, depending upon buying habits and attitudes, the location, and the nature of merchandise sold.

Though retail employees probably cannot do anything about the location, they should know a great deal about it.

*Lighting.* Proper lighting will do much to make for good ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Merchants Service Bureau, National Cash Register Company, *Better Retailing*, p. 17.



pearance both outside and inside the store. Correct lighting of display windows increases their attention-getting power, which is important. Proper lighting will induce people passing to enter the store. Tests have shown that better lighting increases sales.

If there is any doubt about the adequacy of the light, people who specialize in lighting problems should be consulted. Usually the local light company will make such a check and give advice as to improvement without charge.

*Cleanliness.* This factor is almost too obvious for comment. Proper appeal to the senses of sight and smell are of the utmost importance in selling. Therefore, the store should be immaculately kept.

*Buying.* Buying in the large store has become specialized. The small store operator must buy carefully to meet present-day competition. In order to buy well the store owner must know as nearly as possible what the customers in his particular community like. He must remember that the articles bought are not necessarily what he would desire but rather that they are purchased to please others.

The trend today is to buy more often and in smaller amounts. This insures fresh stocks and aids in receiving a favorable stock-turn. The store owner must have a thorough knowledge of sources of supply. Sometimes too much merchandise is bought at one time. This is often done to secure a discount which may be granted for quantity purchasing. Purchase of large quantities for this reason may be inadvisable because of the fact that frequently merchandise lowers in value if retained too long before being sold. Also investment in stock is unnecessarily increased by quantity buying.

For some merchandise it is well to keep stock records to prevent the inconvenience of running low on these items. No set rule regarding records of sales and stocks can be made. It is difficult for the owner to keep in mind facts regarding supply and demand, consequently record keeping is advisable.

Style plays a big part in purchasing. On staple goods where style does not play an important part the profit is often small. This means that in order to show a favorable profit some goods must be handled which involve risk.

Wherever possible, advantage should be taken of cash discounts. that is, a discount allowed for payment of the invoice within a given

time, usually ten days. The margin in retailing is so small that this discount is important in its influence on profits.

It is usually considered advisable as a general rule for the small store to buy from as few wholesalers as possible. This practice makes the retailer's business of value to wholesalers from whom the purchasing is done and thus encourages their interest and aid.

The owner of the small store has a real job in buying. The student interested in the small store is urged to remember that buying must be skillfully done there as well as in the large organization.

*Window and Interior Display.* Generally speaking, the small store has undoubtedly been weak in this respect. This situation has been greatly improved in recent years. The retail employee who really desires to make progress must become alert to the importance of effective display. This phase of store operation will be dealt with in a later chapter so we shall not discuss it here.

*Advertising.* The small store should advertise its merchandise. Of course, the best advertisement is square dealing and good service, but this should be supplemented by other means. This has been difficult owing to the lack of facilities in smaller communities and the problem of preparing effective advertising material. That situation, however, is being remedied. Manufacturers and wholesalers are in many cases aiding the small retailer who cannot maintain an advertising staff.

*Accounting and Control.* The cash register is a valuable aid in proper small store control. The small merchants need records in order to intelligently plan operations. The complexity of the records will vary with the nature and volume of the business. Certainly the small merchant should know the extent of his profits and losses and, as far as possible, be able to determine which lines cause results to be as they are.

*Credits and Collections.* Credit is a service feature often looked for in the small store, extension of which sometimes causes excessive credit losses which do great harm to the business. Selecting credit risks wisely and having a definite understanding as to the time of payment minimizes loss. There are some advantages to credit business; in fact many stores welcome such business. But lack of careful handling of credit has frequently been a serious obstacle to the small store.

## WORD STUDY

The meaning of the following words should be checked in the dictionary, if necessary, for full understanding of the text material.

The student should refer to the dictionary for the meanings of those words which are unfamiliar that are not included in the list provided at the end of each chapter.

Furthermore, using words which are studied in sentences and in discussion will aid in understanding their use and meaning and be helpful in building a more extensive vocabulary.

This procedure is suggested for each chapter.

vocation  
recognition  
primarily  
indispensable  
initial  
ultimate  
cardinal

coordinator  
visualize  
supervision  
requisites  
aspirations  
potential  
stock-turn

## CHAPTER II

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### DESIRABLE QUALITIES OF THE RETAIL SALESPERSON

The primary aim of this chapter is to give some understanding of those qualities held to be of particular importance to the salesperson in achieving success. The proper development of many of these characteristics, however, has significance to any individual regardless of what occupation he chooses to follow. In other words, the traits considered are among those which are important in the development of personality.

**Importance of Proper Qualities.** Certain qualities are necessary to succeed in any kind of work. Each vocation requires definite attributes for success. In this chapter the qualities needed for success in retail selling are discussed. To receive the most value, students not only should know what qualities are necessary but should consider how they themselves meet the requirements specified.

**Relative Importance of Qualities.** Extensive and thorough studies of the relative importance of various qualities have been made. Attributes have been rated on the basis of opinions of various individuals. For the advanced student who desires to specialize in personnel work, such studies have definite value.

Unless care is used, any discussion of characteristics which make for success may seem trite. It is sometimes difficult for those who have been successful definitely and accurately to state just what were the factors responsible. We do know, however, that certain qualities are necessary in the majority of cases. An individual who succeeds ordinarily possesses at least some of these attributes. Deficiencies he may have are offset by the qualities in which he is strong.

In studying the material which follows, the student should be pleased to find that he possesses certain of the traits listed. Nevertheless, definite steps should be taken to strengthen the qualities he possesses and to develop those not present in a marked degree. A word of caution may not be out of order here. It must be remembered that, regardless of what we think about ourselves, what others think

about us has significance. This is true because of the fact that in everyday life we work in close association with others.

*Pleasing Appearance.* In work, and in all personal contacts, the impression made by one's appearance and behavior is a matter of consequence. In retail selling appearance is a factor of the utmost importance.

Clothes for business wear should be chosen carefully. Extremes in style or color are to be avoided. The store in which one works may deem this matter of dress important enough to formulate rules concerning the kind of clothing that may be worn by its salespeople. It will be well to consider this matter as it may apply to you.

Clothing for women in the retail store is usually dark in color. Collars and cuffs and other accessories may be used, but they must be immaculately clean always. This also applies where light-colored dresses are worn. Shoes must be polished and kept in repair. In brief, the clothing worn should give a dignified, businesslike, and attractive appearance.

Salesmen should present a businesslike appearance. Clean collars and cuffs are first essentials. Ties should harmonize with the clothing worn and avoid the conspicuous. Shoes should be well shined and kept in repair.

Discrimination in choosing clothing is not sufficient. Articles of apparel must receive regular care if they are to wear well and continue to look well.

Good appearance involves many factors besides dress. The hair, teeth, and hands play an important part in the total impression given. The hair should be clean and should never present an unkempt appearance. The teeth should receive daily care and regular attention as they are an important factor in appearance. The hands and nails, being in plain view in showing merchandise, must be clean and look well cared for. When nail polish is used it should be light in color.

Personal cleanliness is of the utmost importance. Frequent bathing is necessary in order to preclude the possibility of giving offense. Perspiration odors and bad breath are two things that are particularly objectionable and not to be tolerated.

Appearance also depends upon physical and mental health. Vigor is necessary for efficiency.

Mental health has to do with state of mind. Serenity of mind is reflected in the countenance. Poise and attitude, both important, may be affected by one's mental condition. It is not possible altogether to avoid worry and complexities. If it is realized, however, that one cannot escape the problems of life but must make an effort to meet them adequately, perhaps the proper attitude can be developed.

This matter of appearance does not overlook character and right living. Somehow our thoughts and actions have a way of revealing themselves in our association with others. They play a part in that total impression which we earnestly desire shall be favorable.

*Pleasing Voice and Language.* A well-modulated voice pleases customers. In dealing with tired and nervous customers, a low and soothing voice is especially valuable. Speaking too rapidly is a serious fault that can be overcome by care and self-discipline. Remarks addressed to a customer should be clearly uttered. Customers are annoyed to ask that statements be repeated.

Using good English reflects the intelligence and training of the salesperson, so great care should be taken in this regard. Use of endearing terms like "my dear" or "dear" are decidedly out of place. To be addressed as "lady" is irritating to many people and it is unbusinesslike.

*Attentiveness.* The customer is all-important and the attentive salesperson sees her when she enters the department. If there are several customers, she lets each know in some manner that their presence is acknowledged. This does not mean that the salesperson prevents the customer, who is browsing, from continuing without interruption. She lets the customer know that she is there, ready to serve her. Often when it is evident that the customer is interested, the salesperson sees an opportunity to make a merchandise approach. Gossiping with other salespeople instead of giving the customer prompt attention is annoying and detrimental to good results in selling. Being attentive does not mean rushing the customer.

The attentive person listens carefully to the remarks of the customer and endeavors to give undivided attention to her. Almost needless to say, the salesperson should never carry on an unnecessary conversation with anyone other than the customer during the course of the sale. In cases where it is necessary, she excuses herself. Look-

ing at the customer and not at something else in the interview is also important.

*Courtesy.* Courtesy is that quality which causes people to be considerate of the feelings of others. It is expressed by the facial expression and tone of voice in greeting and dealing with a customer. A sincere smile, a spirit of friendliness, and a desire to be helpful are all indications of courtesy.

Being careful not to give offense by being thoughtless as well as making customers feel at home in the store is important. The offer of a chair to an elderly customer (where conditions permit) shows thoughtfulness. A "thank you" that truly expresses appreciation after a transaction is completed is a mark of courtesy that should never be overlooked. Doing these things when one is tired after a busy day is sometimes not easy. They are, nevertheless, to be done without fail. Is not the pleasure which the salesperson receives from a pleased reaction on the part of the customer alone worth the effort? Courtesy also does much to offset the aggressiveness necessary for successful retail selling. The salesperson should have the courage to be aggressive, and the courtesy to avoid insistence.

Courtesy is not to be overlooked in one's efforts to succeed in retail selling. Lack of it has prevented people otherwise efficient from achieving the goal toward which they have worked. When a customer feels that her problem is deserving of special care she should not be discouraged in this belief by any act that would cause her to think you did not agree with her. A reasonable amount of dignity, combined with sincerity, makes a personality winning and attractive, both very desirable assets.

Showing appreciation, where due, is closely related to courtesy. This may be occasioned by the acts of customers or of those with whom the salesperson works. People like appreciation more than they will admit. It is felt that appreciation deserved but not shown indicates a lack of courtesy.

Guidance and assistance offered the customer in selection of merchandise have been discussed. This does not mean unwelcome insistence. The salesperson must be adaptable and should remember that the customer is the one who is to use the merchandise. Insistent argument or other attempts at persuasion will cause loss of sales. Even though many people are not openly self-assertive, they

will not buy goods that do not please them. They will defer the sale to a time when the circumstances are more favorable.

Courtesy implies that one is anxious to oblige. Giving information correctly and in a pleasant manner is important in the store. In the larger store, especially, it is necessary for the customer to ask the location of various lines of merchandise. These requests for information should be courteously answered. Wrapping packages previously purchased with a purchase just made is appreciated by the customer. Offering to order merchandise not in stock is evidence of readiness to be obliging. There are numerous situations wherein the salesperson can build patronage by being accommodating. The value of being accommodating should be kept in mind as a factor which makes the relation between the store and the customer more pleasant.

*Patience.* Retail selling requires a great amount of patience. Patience is necessary in such matters as allowing customers to look over a number of items in making selections, and making careful explanations in order that the customer may make comparisons. The irritable customer and the one who cannot make up her mind are trying. When business is dull because of the weather or season, selling becomes more difficult and fatigue is more keenly felt—conditions trying to the salesperson's patience.

*Being Businesslike.* This is a highly important quality. The businesslike salesperson shows friendliness to other salespeople and to customers without being familiar. She realizes that the success of her firm is largely dependent upon the efforts of its employees. She keeps in mind that controlled enthusiasm is a strong factor for success, and maintains an attitude that is both dignified and pleasant. She is careful not to talk needlessly to other salespeople in the presence of customers. Talking about people, whether they be co-workers or others, to those she is serving is not businesslike. Criticizing the merchandise of another store is not only unethical but brings an unfavorable reaction. A better method is to stress the strong points of the goods being shown. Visiting or gossiping during store hours is a waste of time and does not improve one's character.

From what has been said it can be seen that salespeople should strive to be businesslike at all times. This may be more difficult for the boy or girl who is just beginning work in retailing, but it should not be neglected. Concerning this, a word of caution to the young



worker may be in order. Being businesslike does not mean being too reserved or stiffly formal. A dignified yet pleasant manner is best. The salesperson can achieve this and yet be sufficiently relaxed to remain efficient.

**Technical Knowledge.** With reference to the vocation of selling, this is the knowledge of goods, the sales process and the customer which the salesperson gradually acquires. Practically every line of work has an accumulated store of information to be learned by those engaged in the field. The purpose of this book is to provide material which will supply this vital resource.

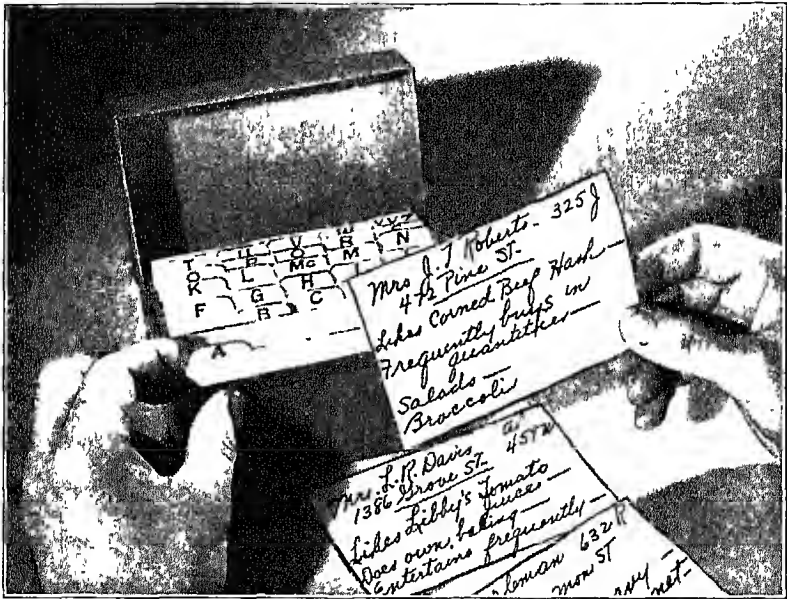
If you will note the titles of the chapters of this book you can readily see that the text embraces a number of fundamentals. Knowing where opportunity lies in the field of retailing and what are the qualities necessary to be a good salesperson; understanding the customer; learning about merchandise and about the factors involved in the sales process—these are part of the professional knowledge of men and women engaged in retail selling.

**Tact.** The tactful salesperson allows the customer to feel she is making her own decisions while tactfully guiding her in her selection. The tactful salesperson does not make the customer feel that she is hard to please. In talking about articles, especially any belonging to the customer, such as clothing, the salesperson should avoid using the words "old," "cheap," or other terms that may have an unpleasant effect. Tact in selling conveys the feeling that the salesperson has her customer's specific needs in mind when showing the merchandise, and that the best merchandise within the specified price range is being offered for approval. The customer should not be made to feel that her taste is poor, even if that is the case, but rather she should, if possible, be guided to choose something more appropriate.

Making the customer and those who accompany her as comfortable as possible under the circumstances is conducive to the achievement of happy results in the sales interview. The customer should feel that there is a genuine desire to give service. With this in mind the salesperson should not endeavor to close the sale in such a way as to make the customer feel she is being hurried.

**Self-Control.** From a study of the qualities given it can be seen that the salesperson in order to be successful must have many positive

qualities. To enjoy the maximum benefit of these qualities requires the exercise of self-control. Guarding against irritability when serving late or exasperating customers is necessary. Being calm and controlled in dealing with the customer who seems to feel that salespeople are her inferiors and hardly worthy of her notice shows poise. Arguments, of course, are never resorted to regardless of the feelings of the salesperson. Habits which may irritate the customer, such as tapping a pencil on the counter or looking off into space, are to be avoided.



A Simple File Card System Is a Help in Serving Customers  
*Courtesy of Libby, McNeill & Libby, Chicago*

Keeping a pleasant expression and remaining as calm as possible, regardless of trying circumstances, are decided assets in selling.

*Good Memory.* Customers like to be remembered. The efficient salesperson realizes this and makes it a point to learn names and remember faces. Keeping customers in mind with regard to styles and kinds of merchandise they favor is helpful.

A simple card file system, or a memorandum book, will enable the salesperson to do a better job in serving customers. Hobbies, merchandise items especially well liked and other facts can be noted and recorded.

One instance in particular is recalled as a case in point in writing about the value of memory and the advantage in using systematized procedure for keeping customers in mind. A salesperson in the art department of a well-known store has built up a clientele among well-to-do people who are interested in art objects. She knows the tastes of these people well, and is permitted to get in touch with them when objects are brought into the store which she believes will interest them. She also has ability to visualize how these pieces fit in with others she has sold, and thus has been successful to an enviable degree.

*Cooperativeness.* The cooperative salesperson gets along with fellow employees in her own department and throughout the store, and with customers as well. She proves herself valuable to the business by doing her utmost to help make things function smoothly and promote progress.

Some of the ways in which a salesperson can be cooperative in retail selling follow. Writing saleschecks in such a way that they can be used readily for the purpose intended is one way of cooperating.

The salesperson can be cooperative by offering suggestions for store improvement in a constructive way. Many stores welcome helpful suggestions, and in some cases cash awards are made for any that are adopted.

Being pleasant in one's relations with others or being careful not to do things that arouse antagonism or jealousy, and following company policies in dealing with customers are other expressions of cooperativeness. Careful observance of oral and written instructions is important for the welfare of the store.

The salesperson can support the efforts of those in other departments by speaking favorably of them and recommending their merchandise to customers. This is an excellent form of cooperation.

Properly arranging and caring for stock for which the salesperson is responsible is necessary for the smooth conduct of the entire department. Informing buyers about wants, likes, and dislikes of customers is helpful and indicates that alert interest which is necessary to success.

*Adaptability.* The adaptable salesperson adjusts herself to the customer. Customers and their moods vary and the salesperson should be quick to respond properly, depending upon the situation.

The customer in a happy frame of mind may like to talk with the salesperson; the one who is discouraged may welcome encouragement; others may like dignity and reserve.

The salesperson who uncomplainingly adapts herself to any department to which she is assigned has an advantage. Willingness to work where assistance is most needed is an indication of adaptability. In these and many other ways the cooperative salesperson can contribute much to the store. Cheerful cooperation will, as a rule, be recognized by those in charge. If not in the section of immediate employment, efficient effort will gain recognition elsewhere and be rewarded by advancement.

*Habits of Neatness and Care in Handling Merchandise.* Stock work should not be considered just so much drudgery to be avoided if possible. Familiarity with merchandise is increased by handling it. The salesperson who has formed the habit of being neat and precise will get pleasure out of keeping merchandise in place and clean. Replacing unsold merchandise after presentation is the one way to be certain that it will be available when needed. Keeping merchandise that is arranged on counters in good order and nicely displayed is conducive to sales making. Persons who are precise in handling stock usually are equally precise in other ways, including their dealings with customers.

*Health.* It should be realized that success depends upon good health. Because this is true everything possible should be done to promote and preserve health. Physical and mental well-being affect the attitude of the salesperson toward the customer. A feeling of discomfort that causes irritability is bound to lower efficiency and result in loss of sales.

Wearing proper shoes is essential if the salesperson is to be in the right frame of mind to give good service. Retail selling requires a great deal of standing, and this points the need for great care in selecting shoes.

Good health is necessary for regular attendance at business. Advancement in retail work demands that the employee shall have a good record of attendance.

*Mental Health.* Although much has been written in regard to physical health, not so much has been written regarding mental well-being. Mental health, we know, is closely related to physical health.

We see many examples of men and women who have improved their capacities to the point of successful attainment, suddenly lose their ability through mental decline. This, most likely, could have been avoided if proper habits in regard to mental health had been formed. Mental hygiene, which is an attempt to apply the findings of the psychologists and others to proper living, is receiving more recognition and is gaining prominence rapidly. Being able to understand and evaluate mental health, conquest of fear, and the forming of proper habits of thinking are essential to the success and happiness of the individual. Learning how to overcome deficiencies, such as exaggerating one's shortcomings, is important. These and many other things come within the scope of mental hygiene. The properly adjusted person is a happier and thus more efficient person. Ability to work with people will be improved, increasing self-confidence.

In a book of this nature, mental health can be discussed only briefly. Because of the importance of the subject it is felt that the works of those who have done notable investigation in this and related fields should be read. The book, *Keeping a Sound Mind*, which is given as a reference in the bibliography, is interesting and valuable reading.

In addition to its value for good living, it should be pointed out that there is objective evidence that a wholesome personality is valuable in any type of selling.

*Ambition.* In order to go far in any work ambition is a vital quality. Looking ahead, having a goal, and constantly striving toward it are necessary. Many people who have dreams for the future seem unable to plan properly or put forth the effort to achieve them. For them dreaming takes the place of actual achievement. Vision and constructive effort turn dull routine into meaningful activity.

If you are studying voluntarily, you have the quality of ambition. Continue it and study not only books but merchandise, customers, and the selling process. Visiting factories and wholesale houses is helpful. Show by your attitude that you want to learn. Be willing to work in new departments. Accept constructive criticism with the view that it is given to help you, and profit by it. Try to keep a cheerful attitude. Do not be one of those who become embittered because you feel someone is promoted because of favoritism. Even though it is evident that such is the case, be too busy working toward your own goal to be hindered. Favoritism often defeats it-

self, and ability usually conquers despite obstacles. Do not let your work become colorless and allow yourself to "get into a rut." Being careful how you show your ambition is important. You will always find persons who desire advancement but are unwilling to put forth effort to gain it, ready to scoff at every opportunity."

Ambition makes for interest in one's work. There are many ways in which the salesperson expresses interest in the work being done.

Interest in the customer's buying problems is of prime importance. The salesperson's function is to aid the customer in solving these. Intelligent assistance in the selection of merchandise that will best suit the customer's needs will make for satisfaction and repeat purchases.

Remaining with customers, if possible, until the transaction is completed rather than appearing anxious to terminate the interview is another way of showing interest. Incidentally, while waiting for change or for wrapping of merchandise, the salesperson has a good opportunity to suggest other purchases. Willingly taking care of late customers is another way of showing interest. Though this may not always be easy, it is necessary for the best interests of the customer, the store, and the salesperson herself.

*Intelligence.* Unfortunately, it is sometimes believed that intelligence is not important in successful retail selling. Those who share this belief are not considering the broader implications of the work. Though it is true that the kind and degree of ability demanded varies (depending upon the type of merchandise sold), to be truly successful, one must have intelligence. Also, with greater emphasis being placed upon training for retail selling, intelligence is stressed as a factor of prime consideration in choosing employees for this work.

Proper knowledge and careful handling of merchandise, intelligent display of goods, good judgment in appraising situations and studying customers, thoughtful analysis of successful methods with a view to adapting them to one's own needs, and knowledge of what and how much to display are factors connected with selling that unquestionably require intelligence.

Intelligence implies many things. The more intelligent one is the better able is she to discriminate between right and wrong methods of doing things. The intelligent person makes good use of her time

during working hours as well as in leisure time. She realizes that success comes through knowledge and its application to the business. She knows that customers are more interested in what an article of merchandise will do for them than in the technicalities of its manufacture.

The intelligent person is constantly studying people. For salespeople, this study includes supervisors as well as customers. It is well to learn what supervisors want and try to meet those requirements. The worker who does not study her particular situation and the standards of those in charge is overlooking a possibility which will have bearing on her advancement. Intelligence supplemented by honest effort is vital to progress and advancement in retailing as well as in other lines.

*Dependability.* Since in dealing with customers the salesperson represents the store, it is necessary that she be dependable. Doing more than a required minimum of work in a willing manner is one indication that this quality is present. Conscientious observance of the rules and regulations of the store is another. The dependable individual never takes advantage of the absence of a supervisor. In fact she feels the responsibility of doing her best to keep things moving smoothly at such times. Getting to work on time and regular attendance are other indications of dependability. Where irregular attendance is unavoidable special effort should be made to notify the store as early as possible in order that necessary arrangements can be made in the contingency.

Dependability is so important that it is safe to say that without it one can never hope to make satisfactory progress in business.

*Industriousness.* Unfortunately to some it appears that achievement is possible without hard work. As a result an attitude of "getting-by" is developed. It is believed proper by those who have adopted this attitude to "get something for nothing" if possible.

The shirker really cheats himself because it is only by sustained and conscientious effort that one develops his abilities to the utmost. This is true of students of retailing as well as persons actively engaged in the work. It is indeed fortunate that the majority of people know the value of work. Otherwise progress would be greatly retarded.

*Personality.* A number of traits have been considered. These

and many others enter into what is known as personality. Improvement of personality is a development process. One must constantly strive for satisfactory progress. Living involves continuous and often marked adjustment to circumstances. The old saying, "Practice makes perfect," is true in the development of personality only if the proper attitudes and habits are stressed.

The measurement of personality traits is not easy because of their intangible nature. They are decidedly much easier to discuss than to develop. At the end of the chapter the traits that have been discussed are listed. Copy them on a sheet of paper and rate yourself. Then determine to strive for improvement in those traits in which your rating is low. Remember that persistence is needed, and realize that your problems are similar in many respects to those of other people.

#### DESIRABLE QUALITIES OF THE RETAIL SALESPERSON

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Low</i>
Pleasing appearance . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Pleasing voice and language.....	_____	_____	_____
Attentiveness . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Courtesy . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Patience . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Being businesslike . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Technical knowledge ....	_____	_____	_____
Tact . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Self-control . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Good memory . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Cooperativeness . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Adaptability . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Habits of neatness and care.....	_____	_____	_____
Health . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Ambition . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Intelligence . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Dependability . . . . .	_____	_____	_____
Industriousness . . . . .	_____	_____	_____

#### WORD STUDY

vocation  
modulate

enunciation  
posture

objective  
patronage





## CHAPTER III

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### BUYING MOTIVES AND MOODS OF CUSTOMERS

The primary aim of this chapter is to study retail customers and their reasons for buying.

Customers are individuals and, as such, vary as to tastes, and interests. An individual's preferences may change from one situation to another. Improvement in the understanding of customers gives insight into the nature of people in general. This is an interesting feature of the material which follows

**Buying Motives and Their Importance.** Motives that induce buying are many. They may vary widely in different situations and with various individuals. The motive in a given instance may not be easy to determine but nevertheless it is present. In considering anything which has to do with human conduct it must be remembered that variations from what is expected are likely to be many and often extreme. Any number of single motives or combinations of them may influence the decision to buy. It is not meant to imply, however, that there is anything mysterious about this subject. One should be aware that thought has been given to buying motives and that organized knowledge concerning them exists. The salesperson who has basic understanding of these motives will find that it has practical application in dealing with customers.

To show goods to the best advantage its appeal must be studied. It should be kept in mind that many times salesmanship is not needed to create a desire to own goods. The desire may already be present, and knowing what type of desire impels the customer will make it possible for the salesperson to be in a better position to sell merchandise that will afford satisfaction.

Keeping in mind what has been said, it will be well to examine some of the fundamental appeals.

**Appeal to the Desire for Self-Preservation.** This is one of the strongest appeals. Features which provide safety in an article may comprise effective selling points. Items bought for protection, such

as quality automobile tires, are sold on the basis of the appeal now being considered.

Appealing to the desire to escape from danger should be done cautiously as injustice may result from its unfair use. If there is a real danger which can be overcome by use of the article being considered for purchase, perhaps the application of this appeal is warranted.

**Appeal to the Desire for Food.** An appeal to this desire can be made by wise display and by the use of skillful presentation of the selling points. People have developed many tastes and the pleasure of eating is as important from the sales standpoint as nutritive and other values of food. The salesperson can effectively present the enjoyment of flavor as well as the nutritive value obtained from using the product and thus make an appeal to this fundamental desire.

**Appeal to the Desire for Health.** This appeal is applicable to the selling of many retail articles. Drug products, foods, and shoes are good examples. The present interest in preparations which have as their purpose the building of resistance and reducing the chance of taking cold in the winter months is based upon the desire for health. If merchandise has health-preserving qualities the use of this appeal is justifiable.

**Appeal to the Desire for Cleanliness.** Since cleanliness is related to health this appeal is comparable to the previous one. In selling vacuum cleaners this relationship is often stressed for its effectiveness.

**Appeal to the Desire for Pleasure and Sociability.** This appeal is especially strong in view of the present stress on the value of participation in games which call for outdoor exercise. Articles used in playing indoor games, golf, bathing and the like are examples of merchandise where this appeal meets eager response.

An appeal to the desire for sociability is pleasant as contrasted with appeal to fears as motivation for buying. The interest in games and puzzles that can be played in the home is an indication of the generality of this desire.

**Appeal to the Desire for Comfort.** This appeal is often used in selling furniture. The salesperson who has the husband sit in the comfortable chair which is part of a suite being considered is wisely applying this appeal. Shoes are often presented on this basis.

**Appeal to the Desire for Beauty.** This desire has a decided in-

fluence upon the sale of such articles as garden seeds and supplies, art goods, and many others. In fact, the tendency today is to attempt to beautify as many articles as possible. While there may be differences of opinion about results, emphasis upon design, color, and style is consistent. Packaging of articles is receiving much attention. Often the package or container is designed in such a way as to have value for use after its original contents are consumed.

The desire for beauty is worthy and an appeal to it usually proves effective.

Desire for personal beauty is an impelling force in purchasing many articles. The appeals used in selling ready-to-wear, beauty preparations and luxury articles have their basis in this desire.

**Appeal to the Love of Others.** Love is one of the strongest emotions. The sacrifice a parent will make for a child because of it is constantly evidenced. Appeal to it can be made through many articles in the store. Some of these articles, for example, are toys and books; others are related to necessities such as food, shelter, or clothing. In fact, there is practically no limit to the number of items, in selling which, this appeal can be wisely used.

Appealing to love of the opposite sex is likewise an important factor in selling. Customers often are more particular in buying articles for others than for themselves and frequently will want articles that are higher in price than they would ordinarily consider. Aiding the customer in deciding upon an appropriate article and visualizing the pleasure that will be derived from it by the recipient is usually appreciated. This appeal may be applied in selling almost any type of goods.

**Appeal to the Desire to Excel.** The desire for prestige probably has more to do with buying than is admitted. Items that have the effect of making the owner feel that she is respected because of their possession may be sold on this basis. Clothing which has unusual characteristics in design or quality is an example of goods for which an appeal to the desire to excel might be used. Articles for the home, such as furnishings of late or unusual design, might be sold on this basis also.

"Keeping up with the Joneses" is the motive behind the purchase of many articles in the retail store. As with the appeal to fear, it is felt that other desires are more worthy. It is true that the

motive does exist, and in general, perhaps, does some good for the progress of society. When it resolves, however, into a selfish desire to outdo others merely for the sake of doing so, it does not seem to be the best basis upon which to obtain business. This appeal should be used with discretion as, in many cases, others would doubtless give more lasting satisfaction.

**Appeal to the Desire to Imitate.** This desire helps to explain the attempt to buy clothing in current vogue, and is important in selling articles where this urge plays a large part.

Fads, which are prevalent in the age in which we are living, are also accounted for to some extent by the desire to do as others do. Wearing clothing similar to that worn by a favorite movie star is not confined to children. A dress, even though inexpensive, which is designed to imitate one much more costly is likely to meet with favor if it is known to the customer that the garment is a copy of a costly original.

**Desire to Possess.** This desire is important in children and continues more or less throughout life depending upon the individual. It is the desire to have largely for the sake of having.

In your experience you have probably known persons who like certain articles and buy many more than they have need for. Moreover, this desire explains the motive for giving a free trial of the washing machine or piano. Once the article is in the possession of the prospective buyer she usually does not want to give it up. This tendency also accounts for the buying of articles, especially at bargain sales, for which the purchaser has no real or immediate need.

In view of the returned goods evil, about which we hear so much in retailing today, it would seem that this appeal is one which should have cautious handling. The customer often buys on impulse because of this desire and later changes her mind about the desirability of her purchase. This is especially true today in view of the many articles competing for the customer's favor. Therefore, although this appeal is undoubtedly a strong one, the salesperson should have a quite definite feeling that the customer will remain "sold."

**Appeal to the Desire to Construct.** This is the desire to construct or make things. It plays an important part in the sale of articles for the home, particularly if those items must be finished or assembled. The purchase of unfinished kitchen chairs and other articles of

furniture, which many people seem to get joy out of painting according to their individual tastes, most likely may be traced to this desire. The sale of yarn for fashioning knit dresses also is due in part to this desire. This appeal is applicable in selling tools, sewing machines, or yard goods.

**Desire for Economy.** The saving of time, effort, material, money, and other things is a frequent desire. We hear much of labor-saving devices and shorter hours, which are supposed to afford more leisure time, but there does not seem to be a noticeable slowing down on the part of people. New products and a greater number of interests have quickened the pulse of life and intensified the desire for saving time. The trend toward increased business in the food store which handles meats is related to this tendency. Shopping for both meat and groceries in the same place saves time. This desire for saving time is certainly one of the principal points in favor of the department store. The installation of escalators is also prompted by this feeling on the part of the customer that she must save shopping time. Having related articles grouped closely together is another device for saving customer time.

As an example of a product where sales increased when an appeal to the desire to save time was made, let us consider the electric clock. When the electric clock was advertised on the basis of its intricate and wonderful mechanism its sales did not make notable progress. People were not interested in the mechanism. When appeal was made pointing to the saving of time consumed in winding the mechanical clock, much better results were obtained.

The importance of the appeal to economy in price is apparent. Retail store advertisements use the appeal to desire for economy a great deal. Specials on certain articles, store-wide selling events, and one-cent sales are evidence of the efforts to make use of the economy appeal. Some stores make price the chief appeal in their advertising. Others make use of appeals on the basis of quality of merchandise, and this approach requires skillful salesmanship. It looks as though none but those who are well trained in the selling process and have thorough knowledge of merchandise and customers can hope to sell quality merchandise successfully in this period when acute consciousness of price prevails.

**Curiosity.** Though the tendency to be curious is not alone suffi-

cient to cause the purchase of goods, it can be used as a means of obtaining interest which will help in bringing about a sale. For example, curiosity as to how the washing machine, vacuum cleaner, or refrigerator works may arouse interest which will result in purchase. The demonstrator in the store makes effective use of curiosity in selling.

The list of desires given is not intended to be inclusive. Those presented are felt to be important from the standpoint of the salesperson in the retail store. By observation and thought even the student without business experience can see evidences of these desires among people. Recognizing these tendencies as such brings about understanding. It is hoped that sufficient interest will be aroused by this discussion on the application of psychology to retail selling to induce the student to do some reading in this field. References are given and, if this material is not available, there are other books on the subject which should be helpful as well as interesting.

### BUYING MOTIVES IN GENERAL

#### Arranged in the Order of Their Strength

Appetite—hunger	Rest—sleep	Warmth
Love of offspring	Home comfort	Imitation
Health	Economy	Courtesy
Sex attraction	Curiosity	Play—sport
Parental affection	Efficiency	Managing others
Ambition	Competition	Coolness
Pleasure	Cooperation	Fear—caution
Bodily comfort	Respect for Deity	Physical activity
Possession	Sympathy for others	Manipulation
Approval by others	Protection of others	Construction
Gregariousness	Domesticity	Style
Taste	Social distinction	Humor
Personal appearance	Devotion to others	Amusement
Safety	Hospitality	Shyness and modesty
Cleanliness		Teasing

As has been stated before there are many differences of opinion among psychologists as to the number and nature of fundamental desires. Ratings from seventy-four men and women were obtained on buying motives and the results are shown in a book on the subject of advertising by Dr. Daniel Starch.<sup>1</sup> It should be explained that

<sup>1</sup> *Advertising Principles* (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1927), pp. 127-128.

these ratings were tentative and were meant to serve only as an approximation in considering the strength of the appeals. In the list which is given, buying motives are arranged in the order of their strength as determined by these ratings, though several of them are of equal rank.

**Appeal to the Senses.** When presenting fine drapery materials



*The Sense of Touch Is an Aid to the Customer  
Courtesy of Marshall Field & Company, Chicago*

or dress fabrics the sense of sight is invaluable in appreciating the variations in quality and noting the beauty of design and coloring. In order to truly appreciate the quality of fine merchandise, however, one must handle it. The "feel" of a piece of fabric of superior quality always produces a pleasing sensation. By touching the fabric one immediately gets the reaction of warmth, coolness, softness, or harshness. The character of the fabric is conveyed to a great extent through the sense of touch. One has only to feel the smoothness of a piece of fine linen, or to crumple a bit of silk, to get the pleasant sensation which comes from handling high-grade fabrics. In their



softness blankets furnish another example of this avenue of appeal.

The same manner of appeal may also be made when showing decorative pottery or fine quality china and glassware. The trend in modern stores is to display merchandise of this kind on open shelves or display tables, so that the objects are within easy reach of the customer, thereby appealing to the sense of touch. Desire for ownership is thus stimulated.

Allowing the customer to handle the merchandise freely regardless of what it may be is a strong factor in making a sale. The finer the object, the more pleased a customer is to handle it. The salesperson should never appear afraid to place an article where the customer can touch it. Many salespeople overlook this point in selling. By permitting the customer to examine the merchandise and thus become familiar with it, her desire for ownership is increased to a greater degree than by selling argument alone.

The appeal to the sense of taste is employed in many up-to-date food shops. It is a common occurrence upon entering a grocery store or food mart, to be handed a sample of some food product. Upon entering the department one may be offered a cup of tomato juice or perhaps a bite of cheese on a toothpick. Then, farther down the aisle, a sample of a new brand of delicious sliced pickles is offered, while over in the next aisle one is treated to a generous portion of a well-known frozen dessert, which is made before our eyes and whisked into a mechanical refrigerator, a process which is quite as interesting to see as the product is pleasant to taste.

How much more tempting peaches and other food products are when we can see them in the jar. Even when selling foods in tin containers, the alert dealer will show the contents of a new and unknown brand by having on display a sample that is presented in an open container and covered with cellophane, making it possible for the customers to see as well as taste the food if they so desire.

In the selling of food products alone there is a vast amount that can be done to make a strong appeal to the senses. Concentrated study on any phase of the selling process that will bring about a more efficient showing of goods will repay one's efforts many times over.

**Complexity of Human Nature.** Although a study of motives of people as an explanation of buying habits has a place, it must be kept in mind that human nature is not an easy thing to understand.

Those who have devoted their lives to study of the mind disagree about many things.

The student, therefore, must recognize that explaining buying motives on the basis of one or a number of desires is not entirely adequate. The way we respond to any situation, including that of buying, may be affected by a combination of circumstances. In considering any one of the motives discussed, keep this important thought in mind. Strengthen your knowledge of people by observation and thought in a practical way. The "why" is of value, although it may be difficult to discern it.

Whenever generalization about people is attempted, one is confronted with exceptions, perhaps among one's own associates and acquaintances. Arbitrary labeling with respect to people is obviously unsound.

Before leaving this subject it should be stressed that care must be used in selecting the proper appeal or appeals in selling. Probably the first thing one who studies desires and appeals with real interest will do is to look around to see if there is evidence of their existence in practical everyday living. Gradually buying motives can be identified and appeals in selling applied until a sense of fitness regarding them becomes a part of the salesperson.

**Customer Desires to Handle Goods.** Placing the goods within easy reach of the customer aids in selling. Handling goods, it is true, sometimes damages the merchandise or makes it look shopworn. The solution seems to be to have the goods available for handling but, wherever possible, to provide means of protection for delicate merchandise. The use of cellophane has increased rapidly and this safeguard affords the benefit of close inspection without resulting damage.

**Increase in Customer Knowledge.** Through consumer education women today are becoming better buyers. Advertising, study groups, women's publications and other sources are doing much to increase knowledge valuable to the consumer and emphasize its use. Schools are offering instruction in consumer education in their home economics and other courses. More careful labeling of merchandise is the trend with this advance. This points to the necessity for training in retail selling.

**Kind of Help Appreciated from Retail Salespeople.** The following table which came from a survey made at the University of Toledo

shows in an objective manner the kind of help from salespeople that is appreciated by customers.<sup>1</sup>

**First Survey, 207 Men—220 Women. Second Survey, 181 Men—261 Women.**  
**Total Both Surveys, Men 388—Women 481. Total Interviewed, 869.**

Factors Most Appreciated (Some named more than one)	Women	Men	Total	Per- centage of Total
Suggestions.....	154	135	289	20.38%
Suggestions if asked for.....	13	23	36	2.54
Courtesy.....	162	111	273	19.25
Courteous attention.....	33	12	45	3.17
Service—quick service.....	93	79	172	12.13
Show most or all of merchandise.....	49	31	80	5.64
Know merchandise and stock.....	34	38	72	5.08
Honesty, sincerity.....	42	54	96	6.77
Honest criticism.....	27	21	48	3.39
Appearance, neatness.....	9	16	25	1.76
Show interest in customer.....	30	11	42	2.89
Sympathy and understanding.....	8	10	18	1.27
Explain or demonstrate goods.....	18	13	31	2.19
Not obliged to buy.....	8	11	19	1.34
Intelligence.....	15	7	22	1.55
Businesslike attitude.....	10	8	18	1.27
Friendly, pleasant.....	6	14	20	1.41
No partiality to customers.....	3	4	7	0.49
Patient attention.....	10	1	11	0.78
Mention prices.....	6	7	13	0.92
Pleasing personality.....	10	8	18	1.27
Want no help.....	16	4	20	1.41
Act as if service were a pleasure.....	6	5	11	0.78
Quiet sales people.....	4	4	8	0.56
Miscellaneous.....	15	10	25	1.76
TOTALS.....	781	637	1418	100.00%

Another phase of the study just referred to was the question of practices which are irritating to customers. The following summarizes the results of the survey in that connection.

From these studies the student who expects to be a salesperson and, perhaps, eventually have part in the management of a store, can see what is necessary if the business and those operating it are to be successful.

<sup>1</sup>Harold A. Frey, "What Your Customers Expect of Your Sales Force" (Department of Marketing, College of Business Administration, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio, 1934.)

## Practices Which Irritate Customers

	Women	Men	Total	Per-centage of Total
High pressure.....	284	189	473	31.41%
Indifference.....	78	81	159	10.56
Discourtesy.....	52	43	95	6.31
Substitution.....	28	28	56	3.72
Superior, snobbish air.....	24	26	50	3.32
Fresh, overbearing.....	21	29	50	3.32
Ignorance of stock.....	31	16	47	3.12
Slowness.....	25	21	46	3.05
Untruthful statements.....	29	16	45	2.99
Trying to sell something not wanted.....	20	24	44	2.92
Talkative.....	25	17	42	2.79
Hurrying sale.....	17	20	37	2.46
Chewing gum.....	20	16	36	2.39
Laziness.....	19	16	35	2.32
Waiting on two customers at a time.....	14	19	33	2.19
Mushy talk.....	21	12	33	2.19
Flattery.....	14	19	33	2.19
Talking to other clerks.....	19	13	32	2.12
Suggesting other merchandise.....	14	16	30	1.99
Poor appearance.....	13	12	25	1.66
Changing salesmen.....	8	9	17	1.13
Stupidity.....	7	10	17	1.13
Knocking competitors.....	7	6	13	0.86
Waiting on out of turn.....	8	4	12	0.80
Overcharging, wrong change.....	1	9	10	0.67
Miscellaneous.....	18	18	36	2.39
TOTALS.....	817	689	1506	100.00%

**The Customer.** If it were possible to diagnose customer wants as the physician does his cases, selling would be much more effective and less difficult. That, however, cannot be done for several reasons. The salesperson usually does not have sufficient time for, nor the customer a favorable disposition toward, too thorough appraisal. Courtesy and tact must be used in analysis of the customer or resentment may be aroused which will interfere with the sale and lose good will for the store.

Certain things have been observed by competent salespeople and retailers that will aid the salesperson in customer analysis. For example, experience has shown that customers are influenced in their

buying by the situation in which they find themselves at the particular time a purchase is contemplated or made.

The customer may know exactly what she wants and may have come to the store for that particular article. In that case, if the store has the article desired, and the price is right, the sale is relatively simple. If retailers could show a profit at the end of the year by sales of this nature alone, the problem would be greatly simplified. Unfortunately, however, this is not the case. Sales volume must be maintained by selling goods which oftentimes is a substitute for that which the customer requested.

The customer may have a general idea of what she wants. She may, however, want to look at several articles before making a decision. Even after examination of the articles she may be undecided. Here the sale is much more difficult and may call for real talent on the part of the salesperson.

In other instances the customer may be only a "looker." Where this is true the salesperson also has a difficult task. Much patience and tact may be required to make an approach. Possibly by observing the customer carefully an approach may be made that will result in a sale. Impulse buying, that is, a sudden whim or urge, may induce the "looker" to make a purchase.

The salesperson's success in selling will depend largely upon her effectiveness in handling the two types of situations last discussed. In the material which follows we shall consider factors involved in analyzing the customer which should help to make selling efforts more effective.

**Danger Connected with Analyzing Customers.** It should be strongly emphasized that the material which follows concerning types and characteristics of customers calls for discretion in its application. A customer may seem to be one type of person on one occasion and a vastly different one on another. As was indicated in our consideration of desires, arbitrary labeling in dealing with people is patently absurd.

A customer, for example, may seem irritable at one time and amiable at another. A hard day of shopping or a troubled state of mind may cause irritability. The point is that the salesperson should deal with the customer on the basis of her mood at the time the sale is being considered.

If the customer is judged solely on the basis of appearance, a great mistake may be made. If she is not inclined to spend freely for clothes, she may be disposed to spend in other directions. Many people with means do not feel the necessity for buying expensive clothing because they know that they can do so if they so desire.

**The Nervous Customer.** Nervousness in customers is often encountered and must be dealt with by the salesperson. Such a tendency is made more obvious by fatigue brought on by the wearing effect of large crowds or difficulty encountered in finding the merchandise desired. The degree of nervousness may vary, and in some cases the customer may be extremely irritable.

In such a situation the salesperson must be calm and speak in a well-modulated voice. She must be prompt and efficient. Articles not suitable should be removed from sight. Calmness may require great self-control, especially if the customer appears tired. Patience is indispensable. Possibly better results may be obtained if it is realized that the customer's mood is a passing one. Disagreeableness is often not intended.

The fundamental principles to be observed then are calmness, a well-modulated voice, promptness, efficiency, and patience.

**The Deliberate Customer.** This individual is unhurried, calm, probably quiet, and usually interested in detail. Every word and action is likely to be carefully considered by her. She may have a fairly clear idea of what she wants and a determination to see that she gets it. In this situation the salesperson will have to be very patient. The customer must not be hurried. Merchandise information given should be accurate, and the most desirable features of the goods should be pointed out and emphasized. This individual must not be judged as lacking intelligence. She may be methodical, but when a point is grasped it remains. No attempt should be made to force ideas upon her. The keynote in dealing with this type of customer is patience and tactful service.

**The Decided Customer.** The customer who is decided usually shows this by the manner in which she makes her entrance into the department and the way in which she approaches the salesperson. Her step will likely be firm and her opening statement positive. The salesperson should agree with this type of customer and if the desired article is available and satisfactory, conversation may be curtailed.

If the article requested is not available, difficulty may be experienced in selling a similar one. Generally it is not considered good policy to say that the store has merchandise of a different brand that is just as good. Careful selection and demonstration of a substitute item usually will bring better results. Remarks to the effect that favorable comments have been received on the goods in question may be helpful.

Endeavoring to sell better or different goods to the decided person requires the utmost tact, and presentation of merchandise should always include the easy possibility of going back to the original choice. This is true even though there is reason to believe the article requested is unsuitable. An attempt should be made to select goods that are best suited to the purpose, but it should be borne in mind the customer may know her own needs best. Using high-pressure methods to influence buying what the salesperson believes to be most suitable is likely to result in return of the goods. Just how far to go in what is considered to be to the purchaser's best interest necessarily will be determined by the circumstances.

The keynote in successfully selling customers who are decided is to agree with them. If disagreement is necessary it must be done in a manner which includes the possibility of returning to any request made in the beginning, or a return to the department if it is decided to look elsewhere before purchasing.

**The Undecided Customer.** This individual may be undecided because she is having difficulty in making a selection of merchandise, or the tendency to waver may be due to a hesitant habit of mind.

In the case of the person who is having difficulty in making a selection, the showing of an adequate amount of stock may solve the problem. Observing reactions on the part of the customer and quickly (but not with obvious haste) putting merchandise not desired out of sight are means of being helpful to the tentative purchaser in making up her mind. When the sale is narrowed to a few items their selling points should be called to notice.

The customer who is habitually undecided may require somewhat similar handling. Here more aid is likely to be necessary. It may be that this individual is in the habit of having someone other than herself do her thinking. In that case more emphasis on selling points is necessary, especially as they relate to the suitability of the

article for the customer being served. It is often difficult to obtain favorable action. The use of such a method as opening the sales-book with the apparent intention of writing the sales check is sometimes suggested. Such procedures, however, are questionable at best. Unless the customer is thoroughly sold she will decline to make the purchase or she will, at least, feel resentment.

What has been said indicates that patience is indispensable in such a situation. The suitability of the merchandise must be established and then emphasized.

**The Talkative Customer.** Some people like to talk in a rambling way at every opportunity. In dealing with the talkative customer it is well to allow her to talk, and to show interest in a courteous manner without encouraging her to continue irrelevantly. At every opportunity she should be brought back to the subject at hand, that is, the merchandise being considered. It would seem that since talking indicates friendliness this customer would be easy to sell. Actually, unless tact is used this is not so. It is often difficult to get this type of individual to concentrate sufficiently to arrive at a decision, and her inability to center her attention may cause her to defer making the purchase. The best method to use where the talkative customer must be dealt with is to allow her to talk but to guide the conversation in the proper direction, that is, consideration of the merchandise.

**The Silent Customer.** One may be silent by nature or for some reason existing at the moment. A customer may be silent because she is conservative or because she is timid. Silence, in the case of timidity, is resorted to as a means of protection. Whatever the reason for silence, this barrier often can be broken down and good results obtained.

Most individuals react to things they like. It may be advisable to show a comparatively large amount of merchandise and watch carefully for reactions expressed in other ways than by speech. The facial expression is revealing usually. When interest is exhibited in merchandise, it can be met by a careful presentation of sales points. When interest is obtained, the purchaser is likely to be more willing to express herself. People usually will discuss objects which they like.

Most people like to talk about themselves. Sometimes this inclination can be used as a means of breaking through silence. The



nature of the article may suggest what direction this appeal shall take. Many people will converse readily about children of whom they are fond. Care must be used that the customer shall not receive the impression that the salesperson is being personal or forward.

Recognition of the reason for silence on the part of the customer will determine the course to take in the situation.

**The Patronizing Customer.** This individual is sometimes exasperating. The patronizing attitude naturally arouses antagonism and a desire to retaliate on the part of the salesperson. As in like situations, the salesperson's feelings must be submerged to the end in view. The realization that people who assume an air of superiority are petty will be helpful in maintaining the poise needed in selling.

Dignity, poise, and lack of notice of snobbishness are guards against unfavorable results in dealing with the disdainful customer. Sometimes a little subtle flattery can be used, as by inviting opinions, or at least in appearing to value those given. This will gratify a customer of this type, since snobbishness often arises through a sense of inferiority. By adopting a superior manner such people endeavor to make themselves feel adequate and of importance.

**The Suspicious Customer.** Confidence may be lacking because the customer is suspicious by nature or because of dissatisfaction over merchandise recently purchased. She may believe that her confidence was presumed on or feel resentment for another reason.

The person who is naturally skeptical is usually the more unpleasant to deal with in making the sale. One thing is plain, and that is, the necessity for winning her confidence. Selling points that are obvious should be given; claims should lean toward the conservative. Guarantees and instances of good results from use of the product should be stressed. Assurance that the store desires to give satisfaction should be made clear. Any unpleasantness should be ignored. Arguments are disastrous, as antagonism, in addition to suspicion, will result.

**The Economical Customer.** This person may be economical because of necessity or simply because she gets joy out of believing she has made a good buy. Of course, most of us receive pleasure from feeling the purchase is wise, but in some a sense of thrift is overdeveloped.

If it appears that the customer is careful in her spending because

of necessity, it may be possible to give her a bargain. Perhaps slow-selling but good merchandise is available. A mark-down may have been taken because of style change, quality and durability notwithstanding. Articles that have been reduced in price have great appeal to this customer. If such items are not available, inexpensive lines can be suggested and shown.

If the customer is one who is economical for no apparent reason, it may be possible to show her that in the long run a larger expenditure will be entirely to her advantage. If this cannot be done, then a marked-down or comparatively inexpensive article may be shown. In showing marked-down goods the original price will likely be interesting to this person, especially if the reduction has been considerable and made for a reason satisfactory to her.

Careful judgment as to the reason for the attitude displayed, and the availability of merchandise covering a wide price range are factors which determine the methods used.

**The "Looker."** Any of the customers discussed thus far might fall within this group. The looker may actually be endeavoring to find merchandise for a definite purpose, or possibly she is just looking for ideas and will not buy unless she chances upon something which appeals to her fancy. In either case she should be made to feel welcome, as many sales are made to this group. In fact, sales made only to those persons who know rather definitely what they want would not yield sufficient volume for profitable operation.

In the instance of the customer who is looking for articles for some use previously determined, all the help possible should be given. Possibly the purchase is to be a gift for a relative or friend. Here thorough knowledge of the line of goods being offered will put the salesperson in a favorable position. Suggestions of value can be given and are likely to be heeded and appreciated. Sincerity and real effort to help should be evident.

Where the customer is simply browsing around she should be made feel free to do so. The complaint is sometimes made that salespeople are too persistent. Women like to look around and they enjoy making well-considered selections or finding something new and pleasing. The self-service grocery store is an example of a retail institution where this desire is recognized.

Although the salesperson should not interfere with a feeling of

freedom on the part of the customer, it should be evident to the latter that there is a willingness to give help when it is desired. Keeping in the background, with an attitude of unobtrusive observation, would be a sensible procedure. When interest is shown, selling points of merchandise should be given in a definite and interesting manner. Courtesy is always necessary even though the sincerity of the customer is doubtful.

The keynote in dealing with the looker is helpfulness without appearing too persistent. This involves courtesy, patience, and the proper amount of aggressiveness at the right time.



Children Should Be Given Courteous Attention Always  
*Courtesy of Libby, McNeill & Libby, Chicago*

**Special Situations.** The salesperson is often confronted with out-of-the-ordinary situations in dealing with the public. It is impossible to cover the vast majority of these. As a matter of fact every sale is unique in some respects. All that can be hoped for in any generalization of the subject is that principles can be considered which in application, and combined with common sense and some natural ability, will bring favorable results. Dealing with many types of personalities is one of the things which makes selling interesting and appealing to those who have made retailing their life work.

**Handling Children.** Children in the store should receive careful attention for at least two good reasons. The first is that parents react

quickly to treatment accorded their children, and it pleases them to observe that the children are given careful attention. In addition to this reaction, it is well to remember that the child is a potential customer for the years ahead. Some stores point with pride to having served several generations of families. As a considerable portion of the store's business is in merchandise for children, special efforts are expended to maintain this support. The importance of the juvenile market is understood merely by tuning in on a juvenile radio program in the late afternoon.

The keynote, then, is courteous and careful handling of children whether they are shopping alone or accompanied by adults.

**The Elderly Customer.** It is rightly expected that elderly persons will receive the utmost courtesy in the home. The same holds true in the store. Just what special attention is to be given will be determined by the circumstances. Where it is evident that such courtesy as providing a chair would be appreciated, this is done. In other instances elderly persons may resent any action which seems to reflect notice of age. The salesperson will have to use her judgment as to what is proper in giving special attention to these patrons. Old people with the wisdom accumulated over many years are quick to discern sincerity and courtesy.

**The Out-of-Town Customer.** Often this person makes infrequent trips to the store to purchase. These visits are of much importance to her since her time may be limited and many purchases are to be made. She may have received advertising material, particularly if she is a regular customer, and has been made to feel that the store is a friendly place. It is natural for her to believe that every courtesy will be shown her. Perhaps some special event is in progress in the city, and possibly she has been invited to visit the store in conjunction with attendance at this affair. It may be a matter of pride with her that she has been remembered by the store. What a disappointment then to receive indifferent or discourteous treatment. Of course the logical procedure is to treat all customers with polite consideration regardless of circumstances.

**Two People Shopping Together.** This combination may be husband and wife, mother and child, or two friends on a shopping trip. Although only one person is concerned with purchase of the article in question, two people will have to be sold and both be made to feel

that the article purchased is right and altogether desirable. In this situation, too, selling is made difficult if there is disagreement between the person being served and her companion. The one who is to pay for and use the merchandise must be given first consideration. The objector has to be sold. It may be necessary for the salesperson to agree with the more forceful of the two, but if the choicee does not seem wise the salesperson should tactfully endeavor to suggest something better adapted to the purpose designated. This is a situation which will require patience and tact.

**Handling Two or More Customers at the Same Time.** Often while goods are being shown to one customer others are waiting for attention. Although, in general, each customer is served in her turn, it is well to recognize the presence of those who are waiting. A friendly nod or some statement which will indicate that their presence is known may be used. This must be done in such a way that the person being served will not feel that she is being hurried. Circumstances will determine the course of action to pursue.

#### WORD STUDY

motive  
appeal  
preservation  
poise

tentative  
gregariousness  
manipulation  
routine

## CHAPTER IV

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### THE APPEARANCE OF THE STORE

Some of the topics to be discussed, such as lighting and ventilation, are the direct concern of the management, but those working in stores should observe their effect. This is true in general because one should understand the environment where so much time will be spent. If retailing is to become one's life work the important phases of it should be understood.

The salesperson is likely to have little to do with the appearance of the store in the early period of employment. Later, participation in display activities will depend upon the place of employment. In the smaller stores salespeople help considerably in window and interior display. In large retail institutions this work is largely the function of those who specialize in it, but smaller, departmental displays usually are prepared by those who sell.

Incidentally, this discussion will be of help in observing merchandising methods while studying them, thus giving some basis for judgment of the retailing institutions which are visited.

**The Store Front.** In large and small communities stores spend considerable money to make the store front more attractive. For stores which cannot afford the unusual or elaborate, new paint and cleanliness will go a long way to make the store attractive.

**Store Lighting.** The matter of store lighting has a decided effect upon the selling situation. Obviously, it affects the way the merchandise appears to the customer. Lights also have an influence upon the customer's mental attitude, since anything directly or indirectly affecting sight produces a reaction.

First we shall consider lighting from the standpoint of the merchandise. Every store, large and small, depends upon artificial lighting to some extent to show the merchandise most effectively. The lighting arrangement should show the goods to the best possible advantage and thus increase their desirability.

Modern retailers realize that the lighting system has so much

influence on sales that heavy expenditures are made to remodel and improve this one feature. Sales usually increase as a direct result of better lighting arrangements.

From the customer's viewpoint also, there is a great deal to be said in favor of proper lighting. Insufficient lighting becomes a source of impatience and irritation when a customer is unable to see the merchandise plainly. Or if the lights are too bright and glaring it is unpleasant for both the salesperson and the customer and may cause nervous strain—a condition which is not conducive to a desirable selling atmosphere. Every effort should be made to have the lighting system add to the general attractiveness of the interior, show the merchandise to best advantage, and be restful and pleasing to the customer.

A recent publication on store modernization states, "Good lighting permits the reading of the type of a telephone directory without effort, but there should be no glare, bad reflections, or bad shadows."<sup>1</sup>

**Ventilation.** The problem of ventilation is one which is important to every type of store. Retailers are recognizing this fact and, as a result, many are installing air-conditioning systems.

**Window Display.** Undoubtedly maximum use of window display has not been made in the past. Some gain has been made and it is now possible for the small retailer to get much help from manufacturers and wholesalers who sell to the retailer. Many of the displays which are prepared for the retailer "tie-in" with national magazine and radio advertising. In order to use these helps from the manufacturer effectively, a few principles should be followed. Let us consider them.

The display should attract attention and arouse interest, which outcomes, in turn, create desire and induce people to enter the store and, possibly, buy. It may take effort and salesmanship on the part of the salesperson to bring about a sale, but if the display achieves the results mentioned, and brings the prospective customer into the store, it has value.

Tests have shown that good window displays do have definite value. It should be kept in mind that window and interior display is

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<sup>1</sup> "Store Modernization Needs," U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Market Research Series No. 8, Washington: 1936, p. 114.

The publication quoted from gives much valuable information on store appearance and is worthwhile reading for anyone sufficiently interested in the subject.

work which calls for considerable study and practice if one is to become proficient in it. The work is quite specialized in the larger stores. Generally in small retail institutions display work is done by the manager.

It is impractical to cover so specialized a phase of merchandising as display in a text on retail selling. Many excellent books on this subject have been published. A list comprising several titles appears in the Bibliography under "Store Appearance." These will prove helpful to students of retail selling and to salespeople and store workers generally.

The following points to be observed in creating effective window display are taken from a well-known book on this subject: <sup>1</sup>

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Power of attraction       | 7. Lighting             |
| 2. Sales power of the window | 8. Uncrowded appearance |
| 3. The merchandise exhibited | 9. Window cards         |
| 4. Color harmony             | 10. Timeliness          |
| 5. Balance                   | 11. Originality         |
| 6. Cleanliness               |                         |

*Power of Attraction.* The first function of display is to attract attention. It must do that or it will not cause prospective customers to pause and possibly become interested.

*Sales Power of the Window.* In addition to attracting attention, the window must arouse interest if it is to be effective. A window might attract attention because of some unusual feature arousing curiosity and yet not create sufficient interest to be effective in selling merchandise. What the trimmer should strive for is the "pulling" power which leads to a desire to possess the goods displayed.

*The Merchandise Exhibited.* Insofar as possible, windows should be planned to appeal to the largest number of potential buyers. Where, for example, the merchandise appeals particularly to women this should be kept in mind in planning window displays.

Unrelated lines of merchandise should never appear together in display. A display is more effective if built around groups of related articles than if many items are assembled without regard for their relationship. It is to be remembered that ordinarily the mind fixes on but one matter at a time. The window has a message to convey and harmony provides facility of expression.

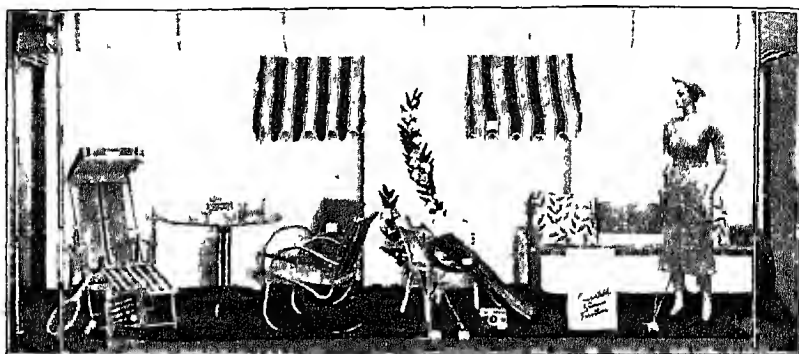
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<sup>1</sup> James Hamilton Picken, *Principles of Window Display* (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1927), pp. 77, 78.



Window display can aid in showing the use of a product. Whenever possible make the display help the one who sees it to visualize the product in use. Satisfaction from the use of goods can be demonstrated effectively.

Items displayed should be available to the customers. It is disappointing and certainly does not build good will for the customer to find that she cannot purchase an article in which she is interested. Customers naturally expect to find in the department a complete stock of articles selected for display. When one-of-a-kind articles



Window Display Should Be Built Around Groups of Related Articles  
*Courtesy of Montgomery Ward & Company, Chicago*

are placed in the window, they should be removed willingly when requested.

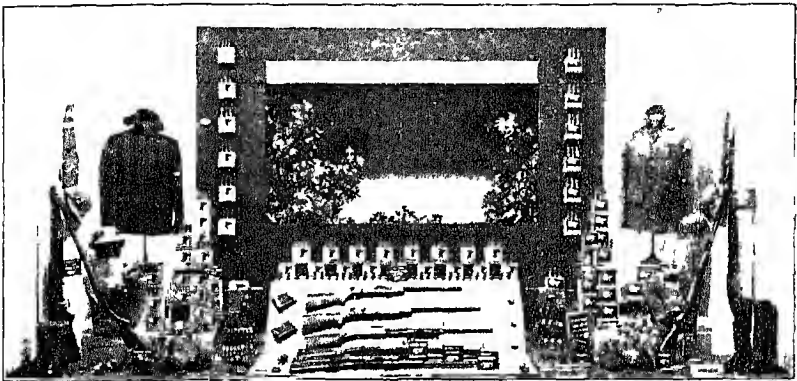
*Color Harmony.* Color is one of the factors that influence the appeal of a window display. It is effective if properly used. Colors which clash or assault the eye, however, will do more harm than good. Studies as to preferences in color will be found in books on display listed in the Bibliography under "Store Appearance."

*Balance.* This means that merchandise must be distributed in such a way as to be equal in attraction on both sides of the display. In formal balance, like objects are placed on both sides of the display. Informal balance requires more careful judgment, because unlike objects will have to be arranged in such a way that the power of attraction of both sides of the display will be equal. To make this clear let us think of two children on a "tecter-totter." If they are of equal weight each must sit at equal distance from the center (fulcrum) in order to make the contrivance work satisfactorily. If the

children are not of equal weight it will be necessary for them to shift position until the board balances. Likewise, if merchandise which is dissimilar in size and appearance is placed on both sides of a display its position must be carefully gauged to achieve balance and create a pleasing effect.

*Cleanliness.* The windows and the displays they contain should be spotlessly clean. This means frequent washing of the windows and constant care to maintain cleanliness and order in the display.

*Lighting.* The lighting in windows must be arranged carefully.



A Good Example of Formal Balance in Display  
Courtesy of Montgomery Ward & Company, Chicago

There must be no glare or shadows if the window is to be successful. The lighting equipment itself is to be concealed as much as possible, while the display receives enough light to make it stand out sufficiently to attract attention.

*Uncrowded Appearance.* Although it is sometimes desirable as well as necessary to display a number of items, the display should not have a "jumbled" or crowded appearance. Overcrowding of window will defeat the power of attraction that aids in selling goods.

*Window Cards.* It is generally agreed that prices should be indicated in windows that are intended to sell merchandise, except when the articles are costly. The windows of exclusive stores and specialty shops usually do not indicate prices.

For window displays of special character, such as those in which historical episodes or incidents of current or local interest are shown, the practice is to use window cards on which printed or lettered

legends identify the display with the episode or event being depicted.

*Timeliness.* Window display space in many cases costs a great deal and therefore should be used to aid the sale of merchandise that is currently in demand and popular. As an example, a window showing articles used by children that are associated with their return to school would be timely in most localities during the latter part of August. After the timeliness of the display has passed it should be removed. A display used to aid in selling articles for Mother's Day, for example, is of no value after that event has passed; and, as a rule, displays which remain beyond the date of current appeal materially reduce the store's prestige.

*Originality.* The window displays should be appropriate for the store in which they are used. The income group which is catered to, the price range of merchandise, the prestige and policies of the store, and other factors will in large measure determine the nature of the displays. It will prove helpful to acquire the habit of observing store windows to see if the points given in the preceding paragraphs are demonstrated.

Before leaving the subject there are several other factors to be considered. Window displays should coordinate with other merchandising activities. To be logical and to make for favorable results the selling message in the window must work with and be a part of the merchandising program being carried on at a particular time. Sometimes a window which is attractive because of its decorative-ness is mistakenly believed to be effective. Though taste and able technique are of value, they are not sufficient in themselves. The chief function of display is to aid in selling merchandise.

Another point of increasing importance is the "tie-in" of window display with radio programs. Millions of dollars are spent for radio advertising by manufacturers. The store should capitalize on that. Tie-in with magazine advertising is also important, and taking advantage of this agency would be helpful to many stores.

*Changes in Window Displays.* A display should not be allowed to stay in the window for too long a time. The length of time that a display is effective depends upon the location of the store, the size of the city, the nature of the merchandise displayed, and other factors. Some stores change displays, or at least part of them, daily, others change twice a week or weekly and some are not changed

before two or more weeks have elapsed. No doubt it would be better if displays in many stores were changed oftener. A story is told which, whether exaggerated or not, illustrates the point. While on a trip a man stopped at a small store in a rural community. He noticed a display in a window which aroused his curiosity. (It should be explained that this man was interested in merchandising, otherwise he probably would not have noticed the display.) The traveler asked the clerk in the store how long the display had been in the window. The clerk replied that he did not know since he had worked in the store only two years and it had been there when he came. Fortunately cases of this kind rarely occur today.

Good window display does pay and one should work steadily for improvement. The best windows for different communities vary. There is much to be done yet in testing window displays for effectiveness. Keep an open mind toward this problem. Tests have proved that good windows are business getters. Those who work in smaller stores have undoubtedly noticed the stress of chain and department stores on window display. There is no reason why smaller stores cannot have attractive windows. If they are to meet competition they must focus attention on this phase of store operation. Study your windows, observe what other stores are doing, and watch for evidence of effectiveness.

**Manufacturers' Helps on Window and Interior Display.** Many manufacturers realize that the problem of distribution of goods is as much their responsibility as it is that of the wholesaler and retailer. In order to assist the retailer they prepare displays that in many cases are of great value. The smaller store especially should take advantage of this cooperation. The larger stores, which have specialists in charge of the work, may desire to strive for individuality and will not make so much use of manufacturers' helps, although this is by no means always the case.

Displays furnished by manufacturers who advertise nationally can be helpful and usually tie in with other forms of publicity, such as newspaper, radio, and magazine. They sometimes serve as a background and are made in such a way that related articles can be shown with the product which is being featured.

The manufacturer has advantage in the preparation of display material in that dealing with many stores he is in a position to know

what is productive of good results. On the other hand, communities vary in so many ways that one type of display cannot be adapted to all localities. Care must be exercised that displays designed for wide distribution have general appeal.

The manufacturer has the resources to prepare effective displays in quantities. Displays are costly and it would be almost impossible for the small retailer to prepare sufficiently effective ones himself. Those furnished often may easily be adapted to specific needs.

**Interior Display.** Interior display can be very effective. It has much to do with creating atmosphere and strongly influences the mood of the buyer. Effective window displays draw people into the store and it remains for good interior display to do its part. The tendency in most stores today is to show as much merchandise as possible in such a manner as to facilitate sale.

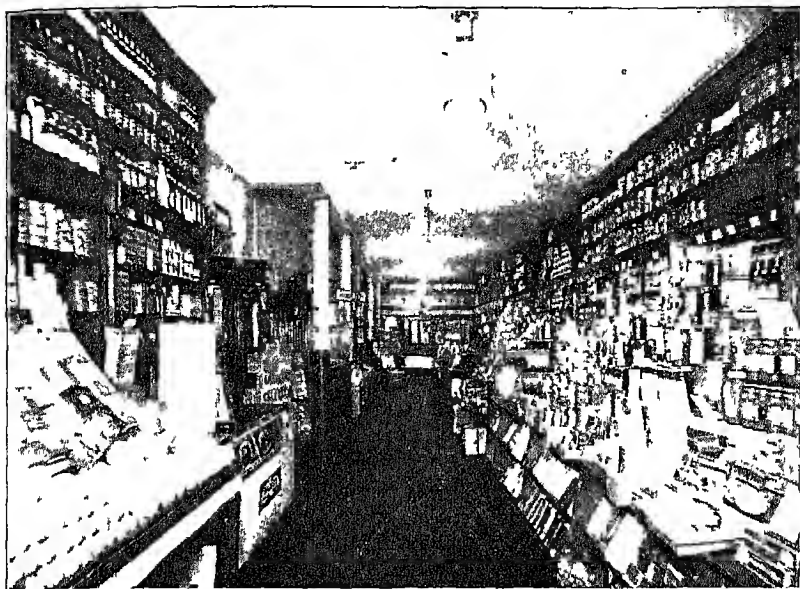
Good interior display is especially effective in selling articles that enjoy public favor. Confidence is already established and it is only a matter of stimulating desire to the point of purchase.

Merchandise well displayed on open counters invites purchase and undoubtedly renders an important service in reminding the customer of forgotten needs. Of course, display alone is not always sufficient. For articles not so well known, or when questions must be answered, the aid of good salesmanship is summoned. Nevertheless good display helps and should be used to full advantage.

*Merchandise to Be Displayed.* The tendency is to have as much merchandise visible as is compatible with orderly and tasteful arrangement. But the question as to what merchandise should be used for special displays presents itself repeatedly. Though we cannot fully exhaust the subject here a few considerations will be given.

Articles that are good sellers should be displayed prominently. Display space is valuable and none of its value should be lost. Timely merchandise often has a chance for quick sale. As in other forms of publicity timeliness is an important factor to consider in interior display. After the appropriate period for selling an item has passed, the display should be changed.

Sometimes new lines are displayed. Their special features and selling appeal can be learned. The customer becomes aware that the items are carried. New articles are selected for display as a means of introducing them to the public in the hope that they will



*Confusion of Merchandise and an Overcrowded Appearance Are Seen in This Store View  
Courtesy of Lyon Metal Products, Inc , Aurora, Illinois*



*After Modernization an Uncrowded Appearance and Orderly Arrangement  
of Merchandise Is Achieved*

*Courtesy of Lyon Metal Products, Inc , Aurora, Illinois*

sell. To this end their promotion is not only justifiable but essential.

In general the profit margin is to be considered in selecting merchandise for display. While it is not always possible to use articles that offer a good margin it should be done wherever possible.

Displays may be used for the purpose of closing out merchandise. Though promotion in this case does not mean price reduction necessarily, this appeal is often used in closing out merchandise.

*Changes in Displays.* No definite time can be prescribed as to how long a display should remain. Displays should be varied, and should be changed often enough to keep customers interested. We know that when we become accustomed to looking at a thing we cease to see it. Change and variety make for interest and therefore are necessary for favorable results. The tendency is to keep displays too long rather than too short a time.

*Use of the Rear of the Store.* Greater value than is generally realized may be obtained from the use of selling space at the rear of the store for carefully planned and well-placed displays. Whatever is done all parts of the store floor should be kept in mind, as rent is paid for the entire area the store occupies.

*Principles to Be Followed in Display.* A few simple principles of display will now be considered.

1. "Tie-in" as much as possible the interior display with the window, and with publicity agencies such as newspapers, radio, and magazines. This does not seem to be done sufficiently, especially in some of the smaller stores.

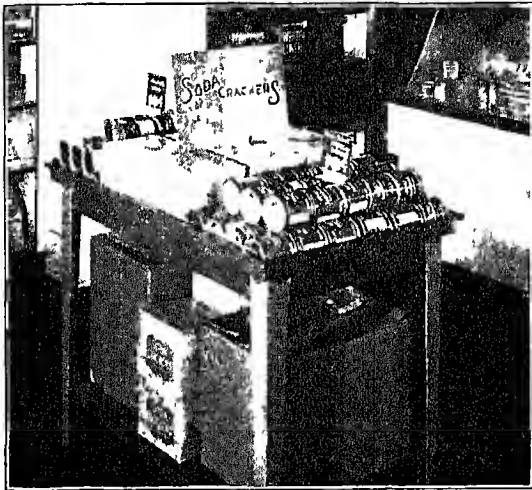
2. In building displays endeavor to create an effect that is pleasing in its contribution to the total impression the store gives as well as in itself. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized, and, sad to relate, it is often not realized. An example of the lack of the use of this principle comes to mind at the moment. The store in this case, which has an excellent location and does considerable business in spite of failure to employ scientific principles, could be greatly improved if the owner would use effective display along with the many other things he is doing. Watching this store it is altogether surprising that it does as much business as it appears to do. It will be interesting to observe results if the present management should be replaced with one practising advanced methods.

3. Displays must receive sufficient attention so that articles will

be kept orderly and have appeal. Merchandise sold from them should be replaced.

4. Prices should be plainly shown. A price card mounted on a standard can be used where groups of articles selling at one price are displayed. Special features and selling points may also be shown on cards with the display. Selling points which attract the greatest number of people are most likely to be effective.

5. Related items placed close together will assist the use of suggestion selling and serve as reminders to customers. A wide selection



Prices Should Be in Plain View for Table or Counter Displays

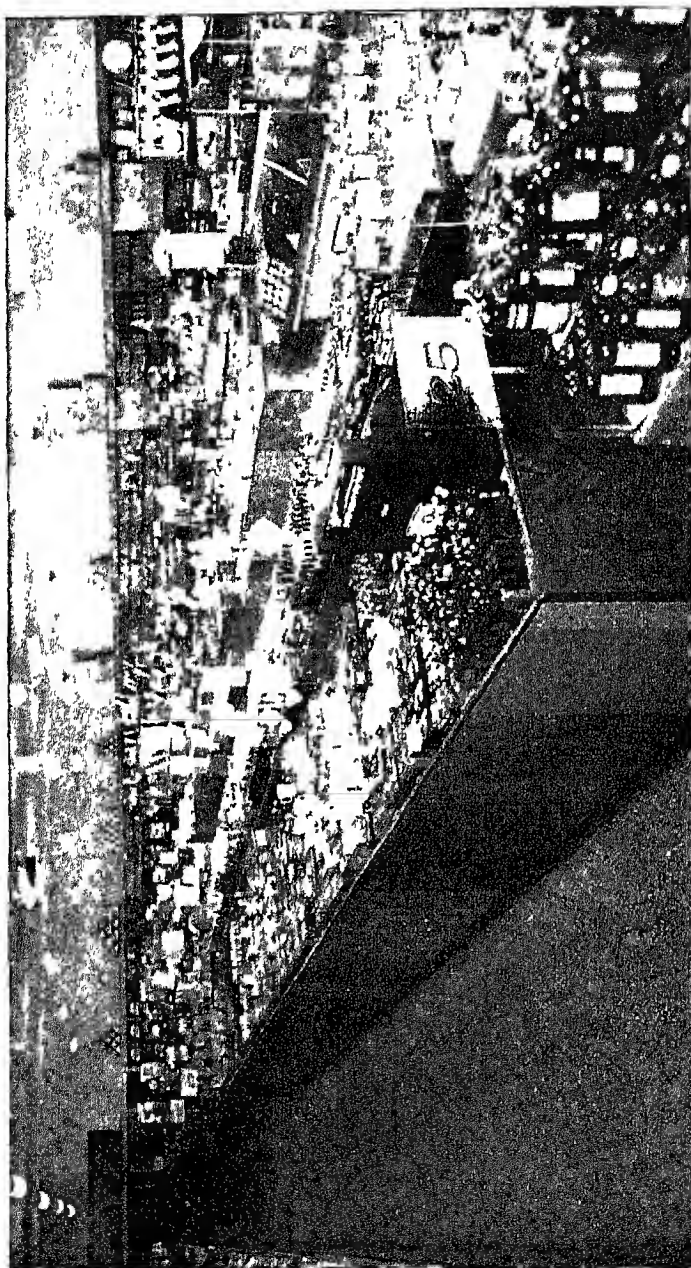
*Courtesy of Lyon Metal Products, Inc., Aurora, Ill.*

of similar items invites comparison and thus induces sale. Showing small and large sizes of the same goods will bring out economy of purchase of the latter and thus aid in increasing the amount of the sale.

6. In general, displays should not be too high as this obscures the view of other parts of the store. It should be possible for the customer to see merchandise over a considerable area from practically any place in the store.

*Display on Tables and Counters.* The table can be helpful in display. Tables should not be too large in order that they may be moved readily and permit flexibility of arrangement. Where much space is needed small tables can be placed together. Goods may be

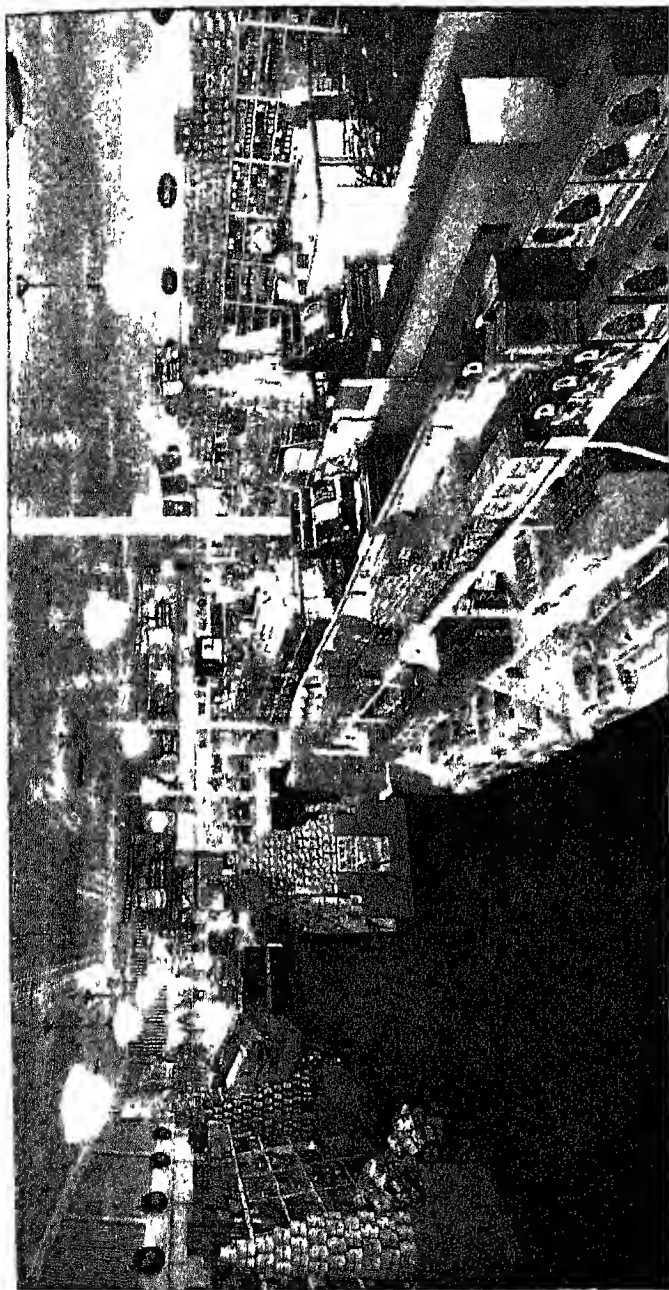




SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT OF MERCHANDISE IS AN AID TO SELLING

The large independent and chain variety and five-and-ten department stores have been responsible for inaugurating such effective counter displays as the one shown above. Note that counters are laid out in sections, permitting systematic arrangement of goods according to general classifications. Labels are always turned to the customer's view.

*Courtesy of Butler Brothers*



#### OPEN DISPLAYS INCREASE EFFICIENCY OF GROCERY MERCHANDISING

Self-help counters have placed great importance upon attractive displays which will not only draw the attention of the customer but also impel the customer to make a purchase. Note that the pyramid stack of cans at the left has two bulging baskets of cans inviting the customer to dip into the pile. Wide aisles are a feature of the modern store's arrangement.

*Courtesy of Jewel Food Stores*

displayed on top of the table, and if there are shelves or drawers below these may be used for storage of reserve stock.

As was stated in the discussion of equipment the tables should be neither too high nor too wide. Prices of merchandise should be shown plainly.

Counter displays if pleasingly arranged and well placed are effective aids in selling merchandise. Often such displays are placed on the service counter. In this way they serve as a reminder to customers of items they may intend to buy, or they may stimulate impulse buying.

Counter displays that "tie in" with national advertising are often successful. Many manufacturers furnish special fixtures for use in making counter displays. Packaged goods may be arranged in cartons in such a way as to facilitate its display. Emphasis is being placed at the present time on packaging, with pleasing results. Care should be used in selecting articles for counter display. They may be timely articles that have current appeal; they may be good sellers, in which case counter display will materially aid in increasing their volume of sales; or they may be special items which the store desires to sell rapidly. Also counter displays may occasionally be used to introduce new items which are expected to have strong selling appeal.

Displays on tables or counters have the definite advantage of making it possible for the customers to handle the merchandise. There is, however, a danger in open display. When people can handle goods there is possibility of theft. Displays should be arranged in places where supervision is possible. The practice of wrapping every article purchased before it is taken from the store will help, especially with respect to large articles. Since profit margins in retailing are small, stock shortages are serious and precautions must be taken to keep them at a minimum. With care, however, it is felt that the additional sales made by virtue of open displays more than offset losses due to theft.

*Display in Cases.* Though with some types of merchandise it is felt that cases are necessary, they do have disadvantages. The cases obstruct the view of merchandise and prevent handling. Of course, when they are used it is felt that handling of merchandise is inadvisable.

*Display on Racks.* Wearing apparel, such as dresses, is often displayed on racks. The racks should be high enough that the garments do not touch the floor.

**Systematic Arrangement of Merchandise.** In most departments some system is set up for the arrangement of merchandise. Here is something that the salesperson may be able to improve or, at least, do her part to maintain.

Since there is such great variation in systems employed in retail stores it is not feasible to attempt an index of the various classifications of goods. Rather, it must be stressed that the salesperson should ascertain promptly what the basis for arrangement of goods is and learn it thoroughly. If this is done it will not take long to learn the location of merchandise, but if system is haphazard or lacking confusion and waste of time result.

**Efficiency in Locating Stock.** The beginning salesperson will be aided in memorizing the location of stock by being observant and making a mental note of where stock can be found. By associating the merchandise with its location, your efficiency in promptly finding it will be increased. To become thoroughly efficient in locating stock takes time, the amount depending upon the nature and number of items as well as how diligent one is in endeavoring to learn.

In some instances it may be possible to draw a diagram of the department as a device to aid in remembering stock location. After the diagram is prepared study it and endeavor to reproduce it without hesitation or error. The desirability of using a diagram as well as its form will, of course, depend upon the kind and number of items the section embraces.

Working with merchandise with a view to improving the present arrangement or keeping the present one effective involves handling goods. The repeated handling of stock and placing it back in its customary location is helpful in learning its location. Also in this way the location of new stock coming into the department can be learned. New merchandise should be called to the attention of the salespeople by the buyer or the assistant buyer and, if possible, selling points made known.

Of course, no amount of system or care will take the place of self-discipline on the part of the salesperson which demands that merchandise presented but not sold shall be put back in its ac-

customed place. This is largely a matter of habit. Some people, it seems, just will not form the habit of putting the stock back in place, with the result that the burden is thrown onto those who are more conscientious.

**Difficulties in Knowing Stock Location.** There are a number of factors which cause difficulty in locating stocks. One is that many departments use extra help. Merchandising has reached the place where stores feel the need for holding special sales on some items often as well as featuring store-wide selling events frequently. This means engaging salespeople who are not familiar with stock locations. Extra salespeople sometimes are not as much interested in the careful handling of stock as are those regularly employed in the department. Then the speed with which customers must be served during these sales adds to the difficulty of keeping stock in place.

The regular salesperson will have to do all she can to make the best of this situation. By giving assistance to temporary employees she may in the long run save herself considerable difficulty as well as increase the sales volume of her department and the quality of service rendered.

Another factor that presents difficulty in locating stock may be the lack of systematic arrangement of merchandise, as previously mentioned. The salesperson gradually does something about this in most situations. It is usually better not to be too hasty in endeavoring to make changes. By cooperating with the buyer, the head of stock, and other salespeople in planning the layout of the department, suggestions for improvement are more likely to be favorably accepted.

It is not meant to imply that difficulty in locating stock is a general thing. The helpful, efficient service of the majority of salespeople is evidence that it is not. There are exceptions, however, and it is certain in your work as a salesperson that you will desire to be prompt in locating merchandise as a means of increasing your selling ability.

**Knowledge of the Store in General.** Besides knowing the location of stock within one's own department it is well to know in general where other items can be found. The customer thinks of the store as an institution and feels that the salesperson should be able to aid her in locating items in departments throughout the store. In the

smaller store it is well for the salesperson to observe the location of the various departments until she can draw a diagram of the store layout from memory. In the larger department store this will not be possible, and the time needed to learn stock locations other than those of her department will be extended. If the salesperson does not know the location of a particular department when asked, she should not guess but, instead, should excuse herself to inquire, and thus be able to give correct information. The floormen in the larger stores are usually quite familiar with merchandise locations and are ready to help the salesperson. Guessing is poor practice because often wrong information is given, and when this occurs the customer becomes disgruntled. A courteous answer to the effect that the salesperson does not know the location of the merchandise but will be glad to find out will seldom be resented, whereas a casual guess that misdirects may perhaps be so irritating as to result in formal complaint. (We shall discuss the directing of customers more fully in the chapter that deals with activities of salespeople in developing business.)

**Routine Stockkeeping Duties.** A number of activities are carried on daily in doing stock work. These are likely to include the following:

1. If stock covers are used these are removed at the beginning of each business day.

2. Cases are cleaned and dusting done. A spotless appearance is desired for fixtures and merchandise.

3. The arrangement of merchandise is noted. Any rearrangement which may improve the sales possibilities of goods is given attention. Existing displays are inspected to see that everything is in order, and new displays may be put up. The amount of participation by the salesperson in display work depends upon the policy of the store in which she is employed.

4. Amounts of stock are checked and steps taken for replenishment of merchandise where it is deemed advisable.

5. Care is taken that price cards are in place and that articles are properly ticketed.

6. Covers are replaced at the close of the day. Where display cases are used they may be locked, since one of their chief functions is to protect merchandise against loss.

**General Stockkeeping Duties.** There is other work in connection with stockkeeping which is important, though it may not be quite so routine as that just discussed. It will vary, and although the following list gives a general idea of what may be expected, it is not all inclusive.

1. Where a garment or other merchandise is composed of parts,



*A Spotless Appearance Is Desired for Fixtures and Merchandise  
Courtesy of Labby, McNeill & Labby, Chicago*

caution must be taken to see that the parts are kept together. This principle applies for a number of different articles—suits and dresses, lingerie, curtains, linens, and so on.

It is annoying to the customer, and is a bad reflection upon the store when merchandise is in any way defective at the time its purchase is being considered. Where tickets are torn, missing, or soiled a bad impression is made upon the customer. The efficient salesperson is careful that this situation does not exist.

2. Goods should be kept clean, and needed repairs should be made. Spots should be removed, and missing buttons and snaps should receive attention.

3. Returned goods must be inspected in order to be sure that they have not been damaged. This is done in the interest of sales and to prevent dissatisfaction of customers because of receiving defective articles.

4. Damage to merchandise should be reported to the person who is responsible for keeping satisfactory and adequate stocks of goods on hand.

5. Needed repairs to fixtures should likewise be brought to the attention of those responsible for their maintenance. Early care in this matter will in many instances prevent large expenditures later. Though strictly speaking this is not stock work, it is closely related. It is a situation in which the salesperson can cooperate to improve conditions in the store. The efficient individual will not avoid responsibility in this or in other matters.

6. *The salesperson must be alert to prevent shoplifting.* What to do when thieving is observed depends upon the instructions given in the store in which one is employed. Suffice it to say that great care is necessary in dealing with situations of this nature because of legal and other complications which may arise if false accusation or other error occurs.

7. Every effort should be made by the salesperson to do her part in the good housekeeping activities carried on in the store. Cleanliness and orderliness are demanded.

In working with merchandise care should be taken that it be kept in the best possible condition. Where it is kept in drawers, careful arrangement and handling will prevent it from becoming crumpled. Anything that detracts from the fresh appearance of goods decreases its sales possibilities. It should always be kept in mind that merchandise is the equivalent of money, consequently it is deserving of the same cautious treatment.

**Counting Merchandise.** In some departments salespeople are asked to count merchandise frequently and make a report on quantities. Where items have a high unit value records are kept which, with other information, show quantities received and sold. Record systems are more or less costly to maintain, depending upon their complexity, and for this reason it is not considered possible to keep them for items of small unit value. Control is exercised by frequent check-ups, and in this the salesperson has a definite responsibility.



It should be stated that even where records are maintained counts should, if possible, be made frequently. Errors creep into records which lower their value or make them worthless. More control in retailing is the order of the day, and the salesperson who understands this fact and endeavors to know why, enhances her value to the store. There is a temptation to be concerned with making sales to the exclusion of other phases of saleswork. This is a mistake—the need of stock work must not be overlooked.

**Inventories.** General semiannual inventories are taken in many stores. The help of the salesperson is necessary in performing this task. Plans for the inventory are carefully made in advance. Counting merchandise and writing its description and quantity on forms supplied for the purpose are duties which usually fall to the sales staff. Two persons may work together, one calling off the descriptions and quantities and the other recording them on the inventory forms.

The main thing which should be kept in mind is that omissions, miscounts, or anything that detracts from the accuracy of the inventory is serious. Extensive studies have been made as to causes for seeming shortages of stock. Careless inventory taking is a common cause. Profits for the year according to the books of account will be affected by stock shortages, either real or apparent, and this is of the utmost concern to the store. Accuracy on the part of the salesperson is essential in helping in the work of taking inventory.

**Damages to Merchandise.** The reasons for damages to merchandise are varied. The kind of goods and the particular conditions under which one works will have an effect upon this problem. In view of the fact that retail profits are relatively small the student who is now selling, or aspiring to sell, can readily see that losses must be kept to a minimum. A few of the more common causes for damages to merchandise are:

1. Goods are often soiled by handling. Though open displays and aisle tables lend aid in making sales they are also a factor in losses caused through handling and soil.

2. Allowing garments to touch the floor is likely to harm them. Care in taking them from racks and in handling will eliminate this risk.

3. It is often found that returned merchandise has been damaged by customer carelessness. The only thing the salesperson can do

to prevent this is to endeavor to reduce the number of returns. This is more fully discussed in Chapter XVI, "How the Salesperson Can Aid in Developing Business."

4. Glassware is sometimes cracked or broken by the carelessness of prospective customers, or by the salesperson herself.

5. Enamelware may be chipped by improper handling or in falling.

6. Furniture may be scratched or marred.

7. Toys may be harmed by rough handling.

8. Lip rouge or perspiration may damage garments which are tried on by the customer.

9. Hosiery may be damaged by rings worn by persons examining it.

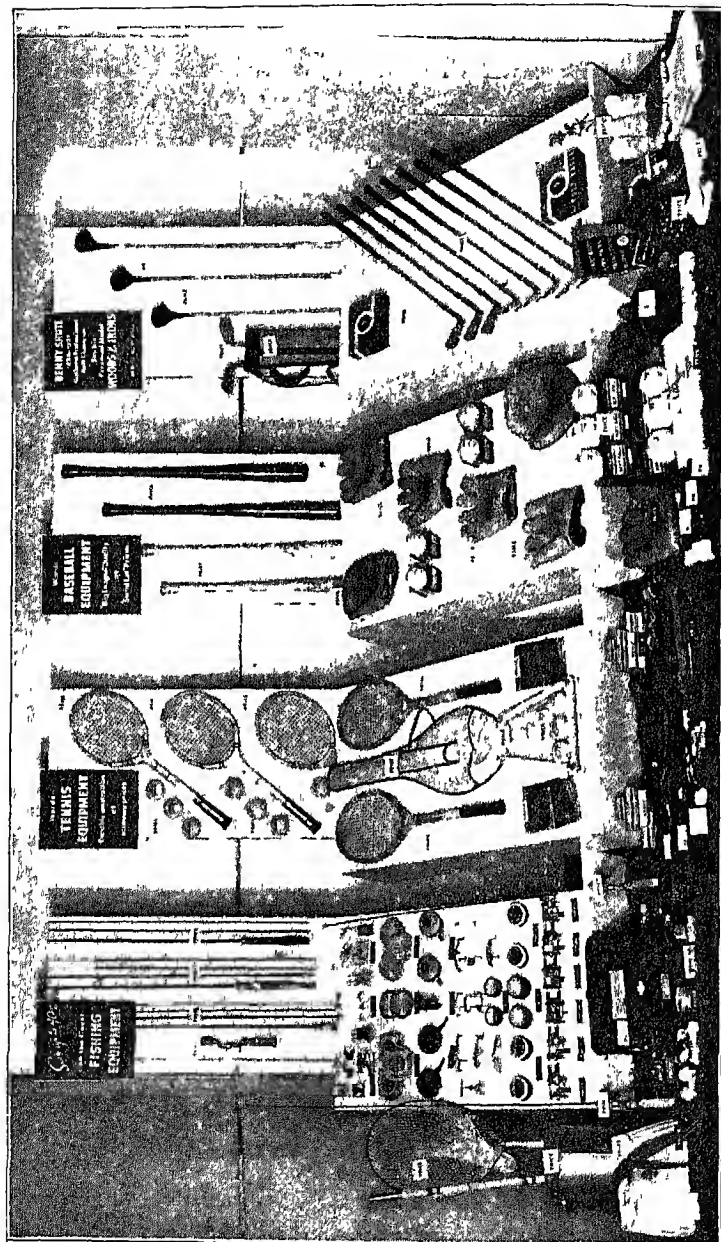
10. Canned goods may be dented by dropping. Since purchasers object to receiving goods with an imperfect appearance care must be taken in its handling.

#### WORD STUDY

harmony  
timely

visible  
impression

designate  
replenish



AN ATTRACTIVE SPRING DISPLAY. OBSERVATION OF THE WINDOWS AIDS SALESPeOPLE IN KNOWING THE MERCHANDISE SOLD BY THEIR STORES

*Courtesy of Montgomery Ward & Company, Chicago*

## CHAPTER V

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### MERCHANDISE INFORMATION

This chapter and the one following provide information on textiles. A knowledge of textiles is helpful to those engaged in selling textile goods. In addition, good judgment in buying fabrics is largely dependent upon an understanding of the basic materials involved in their manufacture.

The increasing number of publications designed as purchasing guides is evidence of the present belief in the importance of truthfully informing the buying public. Textile information is a *fundamental part of consumer education*.

The real basis for good salesmanship is knowledge of the merchandise one is attempting to sell. In this chapter the student may gain conception of the large amount of merchandise information that is available, and the specific points which should be learned when studying merchandise. The material presented is brief, and includes relatively little of the information available on any one product or type of merchandise. The chapter entitled "Securing Information About Merchandise," will give further details as to how the student can secure material that will be needed to make a fully comprehensive study.

**Present Need for Better Informed Salespeople.** More than ever before, there is an urgent need for salespeople to know merchandise. The present emphasis on consumer knowledge, and the strong sentiment in favor of more intelligent buying, is making it imperative that salespeople meet this demand. The day is past when the salesperson may guess at the answer to the customer's questions. The customer has every right to insist upon correct information.

Toward the elimination of guesswork in buying, considerable progress has been made in laboratory testing of merchandise, in better labeling of goods, and in fiber identification. For example, the Federal Trade Commission has made the ruling that rayon materials must be identified as such. This trend toward specific fiber identification is seen in current advertising.

**What Customers Want to Know.** The fact that customers insist on being given truthful information about the goods does not mean that the salesperson needs relate all the facts about the merchandise she is showing. It does mean that she shall be thoroughly acquainted with her merchandise and have sufficient technical knowledge to advise and guide the customer in her selection.

The salesperson will use her technical knowledge and background of information to help the customer get the best possible merchandise for her money. Where necessary, she will also advise her as to the proper care of the article purchased, and thus prevent possible disappointment and dissatisfaction later. In other words, merchandise should be studied for the purpose of learning those facts which will enable the salesperson to sell in such a way that the customer will receive greater service and satisfaction. This means knowing those features of the product which concern its construction, its wearing qualities, and its suitability for the purpose intended.

Customers are especially concerned with such questions as, "Of what is it made?"; "How can I care for it properly?"; "Is it serviceable?"; and "Is it fashionable?"

**Importance of Fashion.** The correctness of the article from the standpoint of fashion is of prime importance to the majority of customers. Fashion plays a large part in selling all types of merchandise today. Its influence is not confined to the selling of goods such as wearing apparel, where it has always had a marked effect. Many lines of merchandise, such as household wares and appliances, and even toys, are being affected by modern trends in design and styling.

With increased facilities for improvements and strong emphasis on design, it is natural that a great deal of attention and interest should be centered on fashion. The gain in consumer knowledge, which is due in no small measure to advertising, has developed a consciousness of fashion on the part of the buying public. The movies, which are shown even in small villages, have also had a far-reaching effect in developing a universal desire for merchandise of current vogue.

And the mail-order houses, whose catalogues are distributed far and wide, have recognized this trend.

There seems to be much confusion in the minds of people as to the use of the terms "style" and "fashion." In order to clarify the

meanings of these terms in the most effective way, a quotation from an eminent authority follows:

Fashion is nothing more nor less than the prevailing style at any given time. Styles constantly change, some rapidly, some slowly. Whenever a style is followed or accepted, it is the fashion. Thus every important style has at one time or another been the fashion. It may even have had fashion revivals, but a style is still a style even if it is not in fashion. There are countless styles, but there can of necessity be but a limited number of fashions.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it can be seen that in speaking of prevailing styles the word "fashion" should be used.

Before leaving this subject, it is urged that the salesperson, whenever possible, make a study of the fashion element in the lines of merchandise she is selling. Magazines such as *Vogue*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The American Home*, *House Beautiful*, *McCall's* and many others will be found helpful.

**Fundamental Facts of Merchandise Information.** The facts considered fundamental will, of course, vary with the different products. Those found in the list below are to be included in building up a fund of knowledge. From these any number of valuable selling points may be drawn as the sales situation demands. A program of study will include the following:

1. History or background, including sources of study.
2. Materials used in making the product.
3. Construction and finishing (or other facts pertaining to its manufacture).
4. How to judge quality or durability.
5. Uses or purpose.
6. Proper care (to prolong service).
7. Selling points.
8. Fashion.

A genuine interest in the goods one handles is a valuable aid in selling and forms an incentive for studying and acquiring a fundamental knowledge of whatever one attempts to sell. A really complete knowledge of the merchandise will not only include the history of development, but also such points as construction, durability, materials used, purpose, and style. In overcoming objections which a customer may raise concerning any of these points, the salesperson

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<sup>1</sup> Paul H. Nystrom, *Economics of Fashion* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1928), pp. 4 and 5.

must be informed correctly and be able to explain the difference in quality and the consequent difference in price, of similar looking articles of merchandise.

In considering the history of a particular article, the student may ask, "What help will telling the history be in selling, since often a customer will either be too impatient to listen, or wholly disinterested?" Such information is required primarily to give the salesperson that added interest and enthusiasm which comes from thorough knowledge. It will be reflected in the salesperson's manner, and customers are quick to sense alertness and capability. Perhaps a few well-chosen remarks about the article, hinting at a background, may add that unusual or *colorful touch* to the selling talk which captures interest. Remember that any study which enables the salesperson to improve her technique is worth while.

The salesperson may feel that her particular line of merchandise is so commonplace that there will be little reward in studying about it. This attitude is a mistaken one. It is safe to say that every article on the market today contains historical association or an element of romance which, if studied, will prove interesting.

Many types of merchandise, however, are richer in background than others. For example, merchandise such as art ware, oriental rugs, pictures, and fine china, have an unlimited amount of material which makes romantic and interesting study for the salesperson. Such information usually is of interest to the customer and enhances the appeal of the merchandise.

The salesperson who is obliged to spend her time standing behind a ribbon counter, or selling such notions as buttons or needles and thread, need not be discouraged. The many kinds of buttons, the great number of sizes and shapes, and the variety of materials from which they are made furnish unlimited possibilities for profitable study. The story of the development and uses of buttons from early times to the present day would prove extremely interesting. Likewise, selling ribbons need not be monotonous when one is privileged to handle daily a variety of beautiful fabrics in gay and sparkling colors. Blending colors and materials, and learning about the hundreds of uses for ribbons, perhaps discovering new uses—these occupations themselves lend adventure.

Many examples can be found in all lines of merchandise which

will prove the importance of learning all that is possible about the merchandise one sells. We could go on in each line from groceries to rare antiques and find that each object which passes from retailer to consumer presents material for worthwhile investigation. The study of foods alone furnishes a vast amount of information that is of interest and value to those engaged in selling these products—for example, a knowledge of grades, reasons for price differences, and the health values of various products.

It is always necessary that information regarding durability, construction, or materials be accurate. False statements (even those not deliberately false) are inexcusable.

**Textiles.** Textiles in one form or another make up a large percentage of the merchandise carried in department stores. The leading textiles are cotton, wool, linen, silk, and rayon, and knowledge of these is fundamental. These major textile groups will be discussed briefly with the idea of supplying a background that will aid the student in selling most of the leading types of merchandise, such as clothing of all kinds (including hosiery), household furnishings, such as rugs and draperies, household linens, towels, blankets, and upholstered furniture.

## COTTON

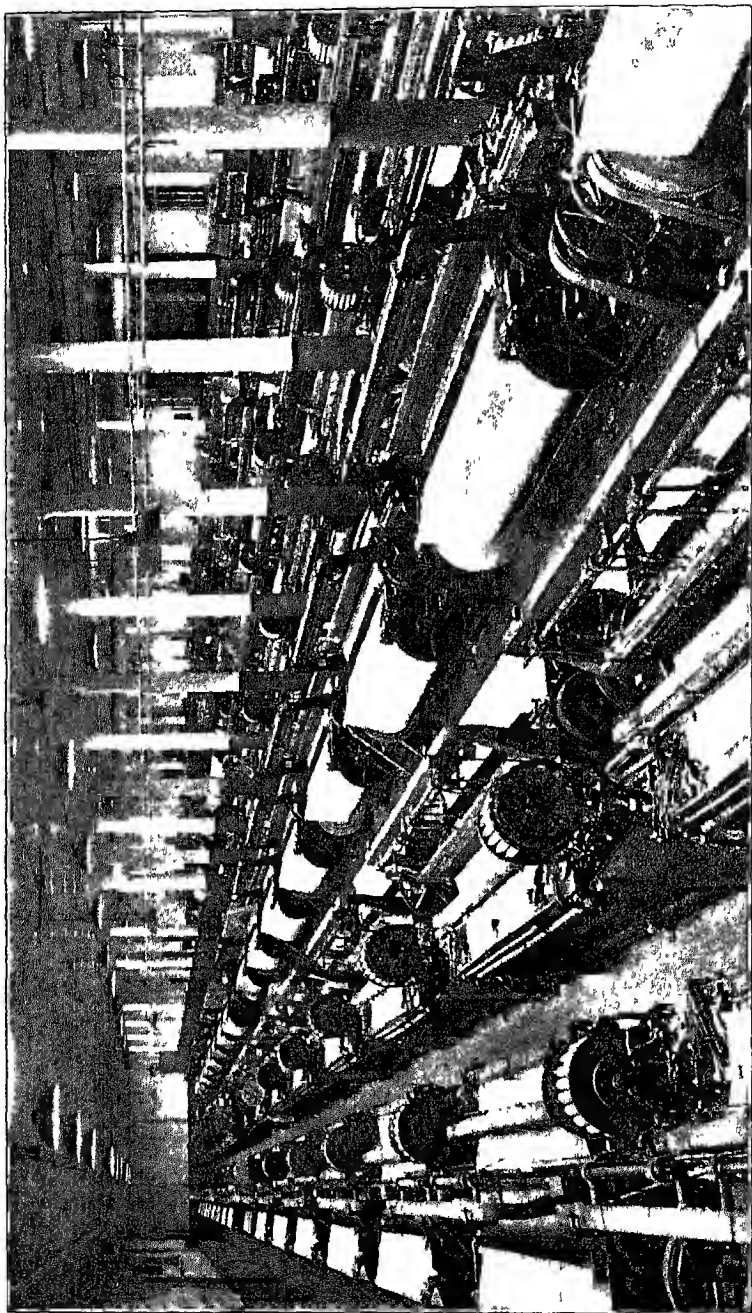
**History and Sources of Supply.** Cotton has been known to man since prehistoric times. Early records reveal that cotton was cultivated and made into cloth long before the beginning of the Christian era.

India was probably one of the first sources of the world's supply of cotton and ranks among the important cotton-producing countries of the present day. Cotton has been grown in Egypt also since early times. The United States, however, leads as the world's chief source of cotton supply.

**Fabric Construction.** The salesperson should be able to recognize two important features in the construction of fabrics. They are (1) the strength of the yarn or thread, and (2) differences in weave. Both of these affect the durability of the cloth. These points of fabric construction apply not only to cotton but to all the other textiles as well.

**The Yarn.** Cotton fibers are spun into yarn or thread. The

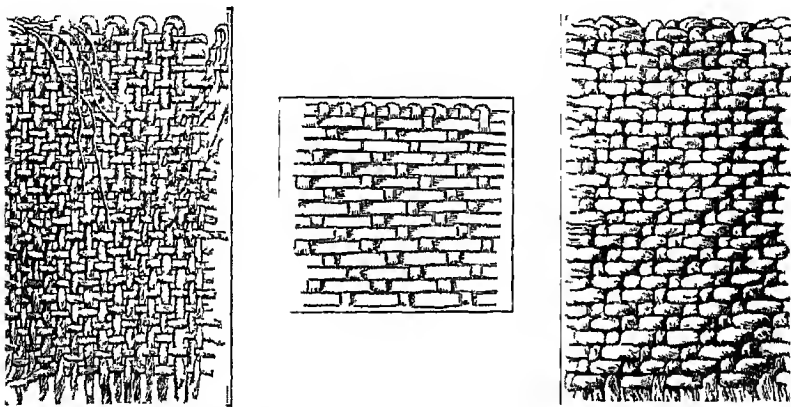




A Group of Looms Set Up to Weave Sheeting  
*Courtesy of Peppercell Manufacturing Co., Boston, Mass.*

length of the cotton fiber is one of the principal characteristics to be considered in judging its fineness and strength. Long cotton fibers usually make stronger and finer yarn. The amount of twist that is given the yarn as it is spun varies, some being tightly twisted, others loosely. Tightly twisted yarns are stronger and more durable and consequently make a higher quality fabric.

**Weaving.** The second important factor in the construction of a piece of fabric is the weaving. A loom is used to weave yarns into cloth and the process requires two types of yarns, namely, warp and



The Principal Types of Weave Are Plain (Left), Satin (Center), and Twill (Right)

*Courtesy of Pepperell Manufacturing Co., Boston, Mass*

filling yarns. Those running lengthwise are called warp yarns. Through these the filling yarns (also called weft yarns) are interwoven by means of a shuttle. The manner in which these yarns are woven together has a decided effect upon the appearance of the fabric produced as well as on the wearing quality. Coolness or warmth of a piece of material is also affected by the manner in which it is woven.

**Types of Weaving.** The three main types of weaving are plain weave, twill weave, and satin weave. Plain weave is the simplest form of weaving. A tightly woven plain weave fabric is durable, especially if the yarns used are of equal size and strength.

Twill weave is characterized by the diagonal lines formed in the fabric. A twill weave gives a fabric strength and firmness. It is found in fabrics that are required to withstand hard wear.

A smooth, glossy surface is the chief characteristic of the satin weave. It produces a richness of appearance and offers durability.

There are numerous other special weaves as well as variations of those mentioned. The jacquard or figured weave is used in making fabrics like damask. It requires the use of a special type of loom known as the jacquard loom. Basket weave is a variation of the plain weave, but is less durable, since it is more loosely woven. Pile weave is seen in terry cloth (used for towels, mats, robes). It is recognized by the loops formed on the surface. Velvet, plush, and corduroy are pile weave fabrics in which the loops are cut close to the surface.

**Finishing Cotton Materials.** Finishing the cotton fabric after it leaves the loom includes such processes as bleaching, mercerizing, gassing, and sizing. Recent developments have made possible special finishes which add much to the attractiveness and desirability of cotton materials. Among these are the creaseless finish and the permanent, starchless finish.

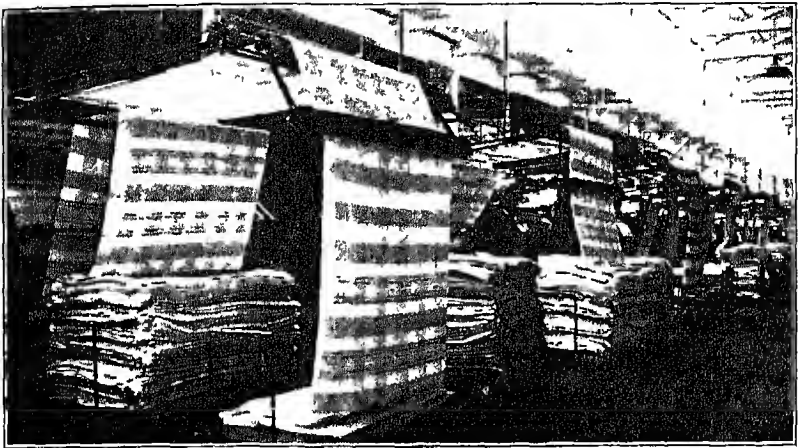
**Bleaching.** Cotton goods in the natural state are grayish brown in color. The degree of bleaching will depend upon the type of cotton material and the uses for which it is intended. Unbleached sheetings and toweling are preferred by many because of their durability.

**Mercerization.** The mercerized finish has a sheen which is attractive. It is used in linings, as a cover material for comforters, and for undergarments of the sturdier type.

**Gassing.** Another process which adds to the appearance of cotton is known as gassing. A smooth, slightly lustrous finish is obtained by singeing off the fuzz or short fibers from the cotton yarns over gas flames or hot electric plates. Fine quality cotton materials, such as voile and organdy, are usually subjected to this process.

**Napping.** The nap of cotton blanketing and outing flannel is produced by passing the fabric through a napping machine which pulls up some of the fibers. The foundation fabric must be made of good quality long fibered yarns to produce a firm, close-textured nap. If the nap rubs away, the fabric will not give the most satisfactory service. In selling any material of this type the salesperson should examine it closely to determine its quality and be able to advise customers correctly.

*Sizing.* A starch mixture is applied to many materials to give weight and body to the fabric. Any loosely woven piece of material, the real appearance of which is concealed by the starch filler, will be thin and flimsy after it is laundered. Excessive sizing may make the material appear smooth and firm, but after laundering it will be sleazy. Salespeople should be able to detect this feature in such items as sheets, pillowcases, toweling, tablecloths, and napkins. A simple method is to rub the cloth between the hands to see if a chalky white powder appears.

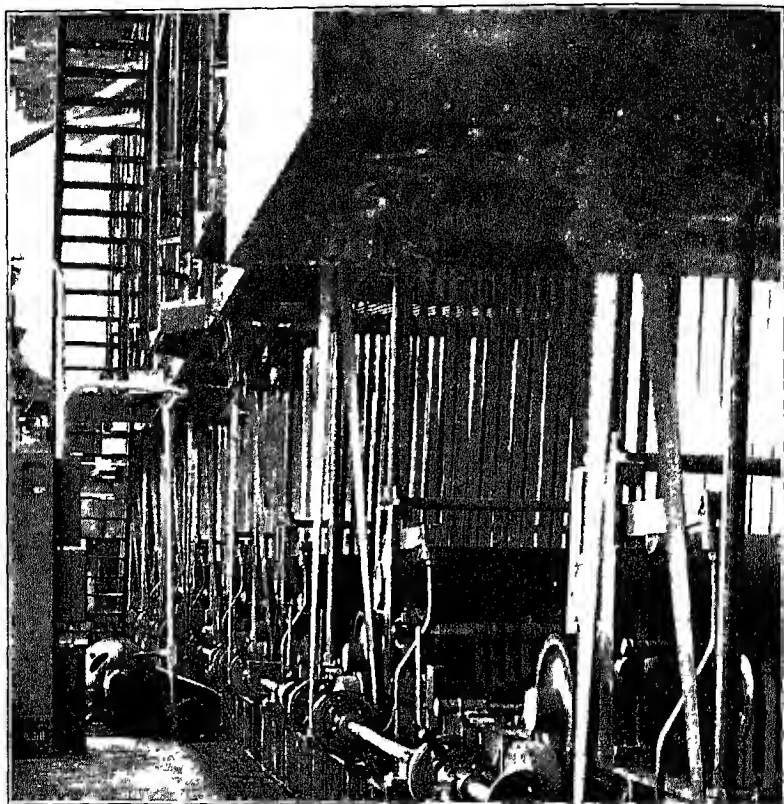


Napping Machines Produce the Full, Soft Nap on Blankets  
*Courtesy of Pepperell Manufacturing Co., Boston, Mass.*

*Dyeing and Printing.* Cotton materials may be given color by either of two processes, dyeing or printing. Since cottons are laundered, customers are interested in knowing whether the material is fast color. The degree of color fastness depends upon the quality of the dyes and the manner in which the dye has been applied. The "vat-dyed" label is an example of superior dyes and color fastness. Reliable manufacturers are placing labels of this sort on their products. Such labels may be pointed out to customers.

**Uses or Purposes of Cotton Materials.** Cotton fabrics are used for many different purposes. These include major groups such as wearing apparel (outer garments and underclothing), household cottons (bedding, towels, curtains, and draperies), and infants' and children's wear.

The use or purpose for which the customer requires any particular type of cotton material should be carefully considered by the salesperson in her efforts to present the best and most suitable type of goods. For example, in selecting children's clothing it is essential



Indigo Dye Machine Used in Dyeing Process  
*Courtesy of Pepperell Manufacturing Co , Boston, Mass.*

for the salesperson to understand whether they will be used for play or for dress-up purposes. Play clothes demand durability and resistance to strain. Firmly woven seersuckers, denims, or broadcloths make ideal garments for play, whereas such materials as organdy, voile, and dimity make dainty yet practical clothes for dress-up occasions.

Work clothes for men, or garments worn for outings and sports,

such as camping and fishing, will require extra durability. Clothing made of denim, gabardine, or khaki are appropriate for this purpose. Men's shirts for dress and general business wear include a wide range of cotton materials of varying textures and design.

Interior decoration in modern homes is making increased use of cotton fabrics. The appearance of an entire room may be changed from drabness to cheerfulness and lively interest by the use of fresh, colorful draperies and slip covers. The housewife should be carefully advised in the selection of fabrics with respect to appropriate use and harmony of décor. For example, a homespun would look out of place with rich mahogany. Likewise, a fine quality chintz would not be appropriate with the ultra modern type of furniture.

Sheets and towels make up a large group of household cottons. When selling this type of merchandise, attention should be centered on the use intended. For everyday family use, especially where there are growing children, good quality muslin sheets are chosen for their service ability. For other purposes, percale sheets may be used. They cost more than muslin sheets, but they are smoother to the touch and finer in texture.

Bath towels of sturdy construction, with thick, close pile are more absorbent. The large sizes are preferred by men. The medium size towel is practical and more easily handled when being laundered. Guest towels are of varied styles and colors and lend a note of decoration to the bathroom.

The salesperson will be well repaid for any special or consistent effort to study cotton goods from the standpoint of their use or purpose. Selling cottons which are best suited to the purpose will secure steady patronage and build a reputation for dependable service.

**How to Judge Quality in Cotton Fabrics.** The strength of the weave may be judged easily and quickly by pulling the fabric between the hands and noticing how tightly or closely the material is woven. Or, scratch the surface of the cloth with a finger nail. If the yarns are easy to separate, the fabric will stand little strain. Loosely woven fabrics shrink a great deal and will not withstand long, hard service. The thread count is the number of warp and filling yarns to the inch. The higher the count, the closer the weave. For example, a piece of cotton sheeting may have a count of 56 warp threads and 60 filling yarns to the inch, while another has a count

of 72 warps and 72 fillings. There would be great difference in quality between the two materials. Such information is worthwhile to the customer, and constitutes an effective selling point in favor of the better grade of goods. A magnifying glass will reveal the closeness of the weave, and is a valuable aid when judging quality.

In toweling it is essential to understand the principal features which make for durability. For example, turkish towels should be closely woven both in the underweave and in the loops on the surface. The loops when close and full will form a deep, soft pile which is absorbent. There should, however, be a balance between underweave and pile weave. This feature should be called to the customer's attention.

**Proper Care to Prolong Service.** Cottons are easy to launder. Cotton goods, especially those used for household purposes, such as toweling, tablecloths, and bedding, must necessarily withstand the hardest of laundry tests.

Cotton wearing apparel of all kinds requires only a reasonable amount of care in laundering. Sheer fabrics, such as those used for infants' clothing, dainty lingerie, and curtain materials, require more careful handling than heavier materials, and they will last longer if gently washed by hand. Squeezing the suds through the material is less harmful than hard rubbing.

Always inform customers of the guarantees as to color fastness and shrinking. Labels such as "will not run" or "fast color" are indications that the material is guaranteed against color loss. The problem of shrinkage has been simplified as a result of Federal Trade Commission definitions for shrinkage terms.

**Selling Points Regarding Cotton.** Cotton goods will withstand constant and repeated launderings. It is quite obvious that herein lies one of the greatest selling points for cottons of every kind. What better talking point can one use for house dresses, children's clothes, or infants' wear?

Cotton is comparatively low in price, which makes it available to all. The economy of cotton clothes may be stressed because of their moderate cost and the saving in upkeep obtained in washable materials. Curtains, draperies, and slip covers which can be washed are far more economical than those which require dry cleaning.

Coolness is a strong selling point for cottons. Cotton clothes

not only feel cool, but also look cool. The fresh crispness of newly laundered cotton garments appeals to both men and women. Cotton is becoming increasingly popular for men's summer wear because of its cool comfort. Suits made of crease-resistant cotton or seersucker do much to relieve the warm weather problem in men's clothing.

Cotton fabrics are decorative. The vast selection of colors in both dyed and printed cottons makes these fabrics desirable and attractive for costumes of every description. There is seemingly no limit to the sources of inspiration for designers in their creation of new and unusual color effects and designs. Cotton prints include an endless assortment of patterns, varying from the dainty floral patterns of sheer dimities and voiles to the bold and dashing effects found in beach wear or resort costumes. This decorative quality of cotton materials makes them equally popular and desirable for household purposes. The great diversity of colors and types of materials makes it possible to have curtains and draperies to suit the color scheme of any room in the house. Color, design, and texture of the fabrics are selling points to be used in the selection of cottons for household decorative purposes.

The fashion element should be stressed as one of the high selling points. Cotton at one time was used primarily for practical wear—house dresses, aprons, or children's clothes. Recently, there have been introduced many exceedingly beautiful cotton materials which have been accepted by fashion leaders everywhere as appropriate for dress occasions. For example, sheer delicate cotton laces or nets in all white or pastel tints are popular for evening wear. Dark shades of voile, dotted swiss, and piqué are practical and comfortable for street or afternoon dresses. Many novelty effects are produced in design and weave for these various types of cotton clothes.

Each type of cotton goods has definite characteristics and special features. The above names only a few, and serves merely as an indication of the features to be stressed in selling the various types of cotton materials.

## WOOL

**History and Background.** Study of ancient records reveals that wool constituted one of the first forms of clothing adopted by man. Early in the progress of civilization the inhabitants of the great



desert areas of the world recognized this important quality of wool. Robes and garments made of wool gave protection from the burning heat of day, and furnished warmth and comfort against the sudden chill and cold of desert nights.

**Sources of the World's Supply of Wool.** The world's supply of wool is furnished by sheep throughout all parts of the globe. The leading sources of supply include Australia, South Africa, Argentina, and the United States. China, Manchuria, Persia, and Scotland provide wool which is of the type required in rug making. The Blackface sheep of Scotland are noted for wool that is excellent for rug manufacture.

The salesperson should be able to explain when required the meaning of specific terms used in connection with wool yarns and fabrics. Manufacturers sometimes use these terms on their labels to describe their product, and it is important that such information be correctly interpreted to the customer.

**Virgin Wool.** The term "virgin wool" refers to new wool which has never been spun before. The best quality virgin wool has been sheared from living sheep. Wool which is taken from sheep after they have been slaughtered is known as "pulled" wool and because of the chemicals used may be inferior in quality to that which has been sheared. The reliability and reputation of the manufacturer is a factor to be considered in judging the quality of the product labeled "Virgin Wool." Live, new wool has a considerable degree of elasticity not present in pulled wool.

**Shoddy.** Shoddy is the name given to wool that has been used before and has been reclaimed for use again. There are many sources which furnish wool to be reworked, as for example, waste materials, scraps, used fabrics, and old clothing. These are all reduced to fibers which, after being processed, are blended with other fibers and respun into strong and durable yarn, ready for reweaving into new wool fabrics. Shoddy does not necessarily mean an inferior grade of cloth, since high-grade wool may have been used in the cloth from which the shoddy was made. Shoddy naturally will have lost much of the elasticity and springiness of comparative new virgin wool.

**Woolen and Worsted Yarn.** Salespeople should clearly understand the difference between woolen and worsted yarns, and be familiar with the fabrics made from each. Worsted yarn is both

carded and combed and is made of the longer wool fibers. In the combing process the shorter fibers are eliminated. Woolen yarn is carded only, and is made of short fibers that are loosely twisted, making a yarn which is softer in appearance. Worsted yarn is tightly twisted and makes a smooth, evenly textured weave. Materials such as serge and gabardine are worsteds. Some woolen fabrics are flannel, velour, and cashmere.

**Felt.** Felt is a very common form of woolen fabric. The process by which felt is made requires steam and pressure. The wool fibers after being subjected to heat and moisture are pressed together into a firm, non-fraying material. Felt has wide and varied uses because of its warmth and insulating qualities.

**Weaving.** Plain weaving and twill weaving are used most extensively in making woolen and worsted garments. Serge is one of the best examples of twill weaving. Plain weaving is used to make flannels. Blankets are woven in a plain or a variety of twill weaves.

A great number of novelty weaves which are variations of the two mentioned above are used. Herringbone weave is a variation of the twill weave and is characterized by a sawtooth line across the fabric.

**Finishing.** The finishing of woolen and worsted fabrics has a great deal to do with the appearance of the finished cloth, and this is more the case with woolen than with worsted materials. Worsted material is usually "clear finished," which leaves the weave quite distinct. The distinct design of the weave enhances the appearance of the cloth. Woolens do not depend upon the weave to make the fabric attractive, but rather upon the manner of finishing. Napping is used to produce the soft, fluffy texture found in woolens, in contrast to the hard finish of worsteds. Flannels are sometimes napped to the extent that the weave is practically obscure. Any fabric which has a heavily napped surface should be examined closely to determine how strong the under surface appears, since overnapping necessarily weakens the fabric.

**Tests for Wool.** Various tests may be made to determine if other yarns have been mixed with wool. The burning test is one of the most common. A piece of wool or wool yarn will burn slowly, with little or no flame, and give off an odor similar to that of burning hair. There are also various chemical tests for wool. The addition of cot-

ton can be detected by the lye test. A piece of wool material which has cotton in it may be placed in a solution of water and one tablespoon of lye. When this is boiled the wool will disappear and the cotton will remain.

The label "All Wool" is a safe indication that no other fiber has been used. It is not always a guarantee of quality, however, since reworked wool or an inferior grade of wool may have been used. The only safeguard is for salespeople to be able to rely on the integrity of manufacturer.

**Proper Care for Longer Service.** Customers should be instructed on the various characteristics of both woolens and worsteds in order to give the proper care for service and durability. Wool has a tendency to shrink when washed; therefore, care must be taken in cleaning or laundering. Dry cleaning is recommended and will cause less shrinkage. Wool fabrics labeled "Washable" will launder satisfactorily if instructions are followed. Lukewarm suds should be squeezed through the fabric until dirt and soil is removed. Rinse well in water of the same temperature. It is important that lukewarm water be used as this aids in preventing felting and shrinkage. Wool materials should not be twisted in wringing, since this stretches and pulls the fabric. When dry the garment may be pressed with an iron which is not too hot. Napped material should be brushed to preserve the nap and to retain its original fluffy appearance.

**Characteristics of Wool and Applied Selling Points.** Wool fiber, when examined under a microscope, will reveal a structure of tiny scales which seem to interlock, forming enclosed air chambers. This form of construction serves to insulate. Herein lies the secret of the value of wool as a regulator of temperature. It protects the body from cold as well as heat.

These facts furnish a background for one of the strongest selling points of wool products—that of health protection. Wool clothing protects the body from undue exposure or sudden changes in temperature since it does not allow the body to cool off too rapidly. Perspiration is absorbed quickly and evaporates slowly, thus avoiding chill. For this reason wool is especially desirable for sports wear and bathing suits. Light weight wools for summer are popular for both men's and ladies' wear because of their utility and comfort. Wool is an ideal fabric for all-year-round wear.

Wool is a nonconductor of heat or cold. This selling point may be used to special advantage in selling wool blankets. All-wool blankets give greater warmth than those of mixed fibers. The fluffy nap, which is filled with tiny air cells, forms an insulation against the outside temperature. Wool likewise offers protection against the heat, and this fact may be considered when selling lightweight sweaters, sports clothes, and sheer flannels for summer wear.

Wool fabrics hold their shape and do not wrinkle easily because of the resilient and springy construction of the wool fibers. This point may be emphasized when selling wool clothing of all kinds, especially those for constant everyday wear or travel purposes. This same quality of elasticity makes wool clothing comfortable for sports wear since it allows free action.

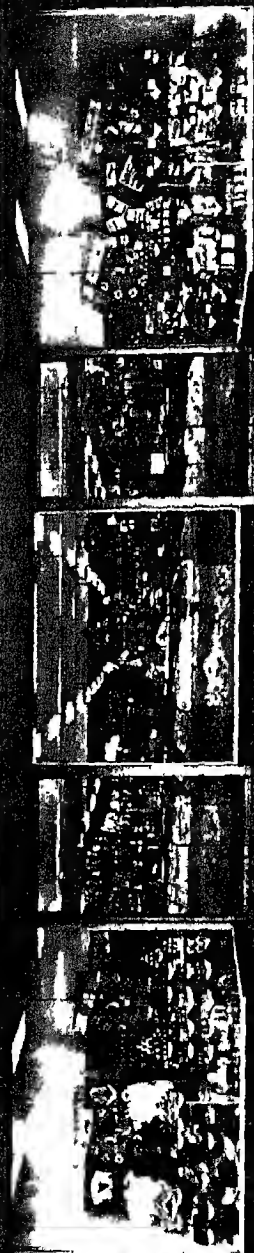
Wool is durable and serviceable. This is due to the strength in the fibers themselves, and makes for strength in the finished product. Whenever durability and hard, constant wear is required, wool is being used. Wool is an important textile in the manufacture of rugs and upholstery fabrics, both of which are expected to give years of service.

Wool is a fashionable fabric. It is used by designers and fashion experts as a desirable and appropriate material in making clothes for every purpose and occasion. Wool is a favorite for school and college clothes. It is practical, durable, and comfortable for school or campus activities. Wool materials of extra fine texture and quality are used for both afternoon and evening dresses. Light weight wools in either dark or pastel colors are favored for traveling, business, or resort wear.

### WORD STUDY

textile	bleach	elasticity
fashion	mercerize	serge
style	sizing	felt
yarn	napping	insulation
warp	sleazy	pastel
jacquard	shoddy	resilient
loom	worsted	

# BEN FRANKLIN



## MAXIMUM USE OF WINDOW DISPLAY MAKES FOR EFFECTIVE STORE FRONT

An all-glass exterior enhances the display possibilities for merchandise, making in effect one large show window of the entire store. Proper lighting is an important item in this layout.

*Courtesy of Bulter Brothers*

## CHAPTER VI

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### MERCHANDISE INFORMATION (Continued)

#### LINEN

**Background.** Linen is made from the fibers of the flax plant. It is raised extensively in Belgium, Russia, France, and Ireland. Hence, these countries become sources of many of our fine linens. A comprehensive research into the history of linen will reveal that the flax plant was known to the people of ancient times. The fibers were used to make a cloth, the fineness and excellence of which made it desired by people of wealth. Linen had its place among their valuable possessions.

**Preparation.** The preparation of flax fibers is a long and tedious process. The fibers must, of course, be separated from the flax stalk. For detailed information on these methods of preparation the student should refer to special studies on linen.

**Types of Linen Yarn.** The fibers are combed to straighten the long, even ones and to remove those which are short or broken. These short, tangled fibers, called "tow," are made into a yarn used in weaving less expensive linen goods, such as toweling, handkerchiefs, and novelty table linens. The long, smooth fibers known as "line" are made into a lustrous yarn to be woven into fine quality household linens, especially table damasks, and better quality linen handkerchiefs.

**Spinning and Weaving.** The flax fibers are spun into yarn, then woven into cloth. Some of the finest linens are woven on hand looms. For both spinning and weaving, the linen fibers must be kept rather damp or moist in order to prevent breaking, and to make them more pliable and easy to handle. The plain weave is used for less expensive linens. The jacquard weave is used in making fine linen damasks.

**Finishing.** Bleaching is, of course, necessary for certain purposes. The natural color of linen is a grayish brown color, and, for some purposes, the natural color is retained. For the finest linen fabrics bleaching is accomplished by the use of chemicals or by exposing the fabric to the sun.

Linen fabrics are made smoother and the luster is increased by a process called beetling. This is done by a machine equipped with hammers and rollers. The pounding action of the machine makes the yarn softer and finer and produces fabric of fine appearance.

**Various Linen Fabrics and Their Uses.** The following paragraphs describe the most common linen fabrics and indicate the purposes for which they are produced.

*Art Linen.* This type of linen cloth may be made of either "line" or "tow" fibers, depending upon how fine the finished cloth must be. Art linen may be had either fully bleached or entirely unbleached. Such merchandise as towels, table runners, and luncheon sets is very often made of art linen.

*Linen Damask.* The finest linen damask is woven of fine, long, even yarn, which is spun from "line" fibers. It is a beautiful, lustrous fabric, usually woven on the Jacquard loom, which produces the floral or geometric designs.

*Peasant Linen.* The peasant style linens are made of "tow" linen usually. They may be labeled "pure linen" or "all linen," which means that the material contains no fiber except linen. Some peasant linens, however, may be cotton and linen mixtures.

*Embroidered Linens.* Some of the most common of these are Madeira and Italian or Spanish cutwork. Madeira is distinguished by its fine, dainty embroidery of a bluish silver cast. These linens vary in quality depending upon the fineness of the embroidery, and the texture and closeness of the weave. Much of this work is being done in China and the Philippines, where labor costs are low, making it reasonable in price. Embroidered linens are always great favorites for hand towels, scarfs, doilies, pillowcases, and table linens.

*Handkerchief Linen.* This type of linen is fine and sheer. It may be white or colored, and it is used chiefly for fine handkerchiefs, lingerie, and neckwear.

*Linen Crash.* Linen crash may be fine or coarse in texture, depending upon its intended use. It is often used in the unbleached form. Linen crash draperies are decorative and are especially appropriate for use with certain kinds of furniture. Crash is also commonly used for table linen, such as breakfast sets, and for toweling.

*Huck Toweling.* Linen huck towels, like linen tablecloths, are

considered essential to the well-ordered household. The fabric is recognized by its slightly irregular surface in patterned weaves. The material is strong, and varies in texture from fine to coarse. It is highly absorbent, withstands hard wear and much laundering, and is a favorite for hand towels.

**Characteristics Which Indicate Quality.** Linen cloth does not become fuzzy on the surface as cotton fabrics do. It does not shed lint. The presence of lint usually indicates a mixture of cotton in the cloth. Good quality linen appears smooth and has a luster. Fine linen damask has a "leathery" feel and is heavy and firm.

Customers are always interested in knowing whether a piece of material is pure linen or a mixture of cotton and linen. Many linens are labeled "pure linen" or "all linen." The quality of a piece of linen so labeled may, of course, vary according to the kind of linen yarn which has been used—that is, whether it is tow or line.

**Tests.** A piece of cotton will burn much more readily than linen. Another simple test is to place a drop of water or ink on a piece of cotton, and another on a piece of linen. The moisture will be absorbed instantly on the piece of linen, leaving a round spot. The drop will remain on the piece of cotton a second before being absorbed and will leave a blotchy stain.

Sound furnishes another means of identification. A difference can be detected in the sounds made when pieces of linen and cotton are torn. Linen cloth will tear with a sharper and louder sound than will cotton. Also, a piece of linen thread when broken appears tapered at the point, whereas a cotton thread looks raveled.

**How to Care for Linens.** Linen fabrics are easily laundered. Hot water and mild soap is effective in removing all evidence of dirt or grease. Berry or fruit juice stains should be removed from the material before washing. White linens should be rinsed well and dried in the sun for bleaching. If ironed while damp, the natural finish and luster of linen is restored.

**Selling Points.** Linen is the ideal material for many purposes. It combines strength, durability, and long-wearing qualities with beauty and elegance of appearance. For these reasons it is adaptable for a great variety of uses, ranging from formal and elaborate table linens to practical kitchen towels.



Linen is the perfect toweling material for drying dishes, glassware, and silverware, since it leaves no lint. It is also highly absorbent, which makes it ideal for drying purposes. Linen dries quickly, which is also an important feature in toweling.

Linen damasks are used almost exclusively for tablecloths and napkins. The finest damasks come from Ireland. They are outstanding in quality having a smooth, firm weave, a clear white bleach, and glossy texture.

Skillful weaving produces beautiful designs and patterns, ranging from those of classic simplicity to the highly elaborate. Each of the various patterns is given a name which is descriptive of the type or style of the design. From this wide assortment of patterns one may select the perfect dinner or luncheon cloth for any type of furnishings. The expert salesperson will assist the customer in choosing table linens to harmonize with the china, glassware, and silver service. Information as to whether the design and texture of the cloth is intended for formal or informal use is often appreciated. The salesperson who sells table linens will find this phase of her selling interesting. Knowledge of the quality of linens and familiarity with the various patterns are invaluable assets. Special features of table linens should be pointed out to the customer and made the basis for the sales talk.

The ease with which linen is laundered is a strong selling point to be used in selling table linens, toweling, and handkerchiefs. Stains are removed more easily from linen than from many other fabrics. The smoothness of the fibers tends to cause the fabric to resist soil more readily.

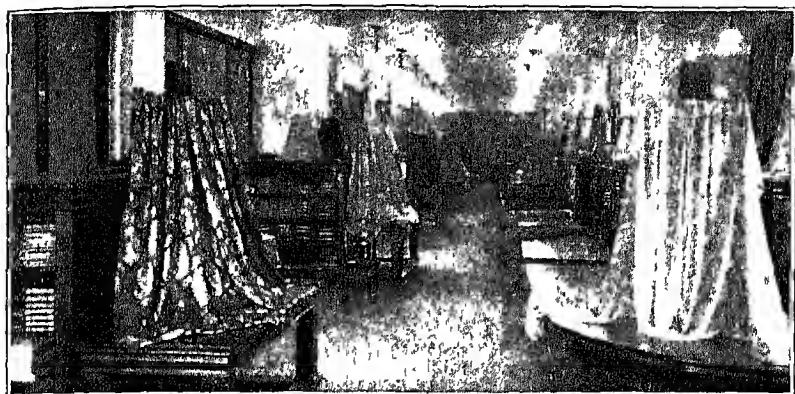
The durability and long-wearing qualities of linen should always be stressed. It is a fabric from which long and constant service may be expected. Fine linen seems actually to improve in appearance with age, and frequent laundering renders it softer and finer. Such characteristics should be used as selling points, whether in wearing apparel or elegant table damasks.

Coolness is a marked characteristic of linen. For this reason linen is a favorite for summer dresses and suits, sport clothes, blouses, and men's summer apparel. Summer wardrobes are not complete without a linen costume of some kind. Linen hats are also popular because of their coolness and light weight. Since linen clothes are

easily laundered, that cool, fresh feeling which comes from wearing newly laundered clothing may be enjoyed even on the warmest days.

## SILK

**History and Background.** The fine texture and rich appearance of silk cloth has made it one of the world's most sought after products. Silk was long considered one of the treasures of the East, the possession of which was synonymous with wealth and luxury. In the story



*Beautiful Fabrics Make a Strong Appeal  
Courtesy of Marshall Field & Company, Chicago*

of America's discovery we learned that Columbus set out to find a new route to the East by which silk and other precious cargoes could be brought to Europe. Because of the costliness of silk in early centuries, and the secrecy which surrounded its production, a tradition of worth and quality was built around it which has lasted even down to the present time. Japan is now the chief source of the world's supply of silk. The United States leads in the manufacture and consumption of silk.

**Kinds of Silk.** The best silk comes from the cocoons of cultivated silkworms. The silk fibers which are taken from these cocoons are classified into two groups known as (1) reeled silk and (2) spun silk. A third type of silk, known as tussah silk, is taken from "wild" cocoons or those of uncultivated silkworms.

**Reeled Silk.** Reeled silk is that which comes from unbroken cocoons. (Cocoons are kept from breaking by heating them to kill

the silkworm each contains before it is ready to hatch, when the filament of silk would necessarily be broken.) The long, continuous silk filament is then unwound. This process is known as reeling. Long, unbroken reeled silk fibers spun together make the better grades of silk yarns used in the finer fabrics.

*Spun Silk.* Spun silk is made from silk fibers taken from broken cocoons. These short fibers are spun together and twisted to increase their strength, hence the term "spun silk." It is more uneven in texture than reeled silk and is used in making novelty fabrics.

*Uncultivated or Wild Silk.* This type of silk is sometimes called tussah silk. Tussah silk comes from the cocoons of uncultivated silkworms, whose diet has not been regulated, and the fibers, though uneven, are coarse and strong. Strong and durable silk fabrics, such as pongee and shantung, are woven from tussah silk.

*Weaving.* Silk fabrics are woven in a manner similar to that used in the manufacture of other textile materials. The plain weave and the satin weave are both used extensively. Cut pile weaves are used to produce silk velvets. Brocaded effects and silk damasks are produced on the Jacquard loom.

*Dyeing.* Silk takes dyes readily. Modern methods of dyeing have eliminated to a great extent such difficulties as "bleeding" (meaning that one color runs into another) or fading of colors. The vat-dyed label often appears on silks and should be pointed out to customers as a mark of superior dyeing.

*Finishing.* Silk materials go through some of the finishing processes which have been discussed previously. Calendering is used to produce a smooth luster. Sizing is used in silk materials, such as taffeta, to add body and a certain amount of stiffness. Silk may be given a moire or watered appearance by passing the fabric through heated rollers engraved with the design.

*Weighting.* The practice of weighting silk materials excessively is an abuse that calls for watchfulness. When weighting substances have been used to excess it means that less silk has been used than might be judged from the appearance of the material.

Weighted material is inferior to a fabric of pure silk even though the adulterated fabric may appear to be heavy and of luxurious quality. Such silks are obviously less durable, since the excessive amount of weighting in the fiber will cause cracking and splitting.

Wrinkles are hard to press out of such fabrics, and they wear shiny.

The labels "pure dye silk" and "pure silk" are synonymous and have become guides to quality. Silks which carry these labels may contain not more than ten per cent foreign substance. An exception is made in black silk fabrics, which may contain fifteen per cent weighting substance. These allowances are made to take care of natural absorption in the dye bath. Labels indicating quality should always be pointed out to customers for their emphasis on value.

**Tests for Silk Fabrics.** A piece of pure silk while burning gives an odor like that of burning feathers. Pure silk will burn slowly, leaving small black balls along the edge, while a piece of heavily weighted silk will only blacken and char, leaving a black, gauzelike substance.

**Care of Silk Fabrics.** Reliable manufacturers realize the importance of giving instructions for the care of silk materials. This is especially true of lingerie, blouses, and gloves. A small tag with laundering instructions will often be found attached to silks which are washable. Salespeople should always point out this feature.

Dry cleaning is advisable whenever there is doubt as to the washability of silks. The beauty of the original fabric is usually restored by proper dry cleaning.

**Characteristics of Silk.** The beauty of silk fabrics always makes a strong appeal. The lustrous finish and fine, soft texture of pure silk garments are irresistible. A wide range of colors is available, since silk takes dyes readily. The variety of silk materials, including satins, crepes, and velvets, presents unlimited possibilities for the selection of materials appropriate for every occasion.

Silk materials are also highly desirable because of their superior draping qualities. The graceful, soft folds and ripples which are produced by skillful draping of the material is a distinctive feature which should be stressed when selling dress goods or drapery fabrics.

The natural elasticity of silk makes it serviceable and practical for hosiery of all kinds. Silk hosiery is made to meet various requirements. Service weights are found more durable for practical wear, while the sheer weights are preferred for dress. Salespeople should always determine what need the customer has in mind and suggest the proper type of hose for the use intended.

Elasticity also makes pure silk a wrinkle-resisting fabric. This

characteristic may be used as a selling point when selling yard goods or ready-to-wear. It is a feature to be especially recommended in clothing designed for business wear, or for travel. Heavily weighted silk presents a problem, since the weighting causes the material to wrinkle. Salespeople should be able to detect weighting and advise the customer accordingly. Materials and ready-to-wear that are labeled "pure silk" or "all silk" may be expected to give much longer wear and better service than silks which are adulterated.

Pure silk garments are always comfortable to wear. This feature is effective when selling apparel for business wear or for traveling purposes. Silk is light in weight and never feels bulky or heavy to the wearer.

Silk fabrics never seem scratchy or irritating. The smoothness and softness of pure silk materials makes them comfortable and soothing to the most delicate skin. These characteristics may be stressed when selling infants' wear or garments such as lounging robes, pajamas, and lingerie.

Customers are always interested in clothes which not only look well, but also wear well and are comfortable and practical. Silk fabrics answer this need.

## RAYON

**Background.** Rayon forms a fifth major textile group. There has been an extremely rapid growth in the development and improvement of rayon. It holds an important position in the world of textiles because of its great versatility and wide adaptation. Rayon is now rightfully considered a separate and distinct textile, with qualities and characteristics of its own.

The base of the rayon fiber in cellulose, which comes from two principal sources, (1) spruce wood pulp and (2) cotton linters. Since rayon is one of the newest fibers, and is man made, there is a considerable amount of technical knowledge to be acquired by the salesperson who desires to have a thorough understanding of the processes involved in its fabrication. Interesting data may be found on how the process of producing rayon has been developed from experiment in a chemist's laboratory to an industry of major rank. This background of information is essential to build up the confidence and appreciation which comes from definite knowledge of how the fabric

is made and what are its chief characteristics. The student will refer to the list of suggested readings in the chapter entitled "Securing Information About Merchandise," for technical data. The discussion here will be confined principally to the chief types of rayon fibers, their characteristics, and selling features.

**Types of Rayon Fibers.** There are three main processes by which rayon fibers are now being made. These are known as the viscose process, the cellulose acetate process, and the cuprammonium process. The fibers produced by each of these methods vary considerably in their specific characteristics. It is important for salespeople to know and recognize these differences in the rayon materials which they sell.

**Spun Rayon.** Spun rayon is composed of short fibers of any type of rayon which are spun together to form yarn in a way similar to that used in making spun silk. Spun rayon yarns are used extensively. They may be blended with other fibers such as wool, cotton, or silk. Each season finds new and interesting combinations in these materials for many and varied purposes. These fabrics have been well received by the public. Their practical mid-season weight makes them popular for year-round wear. Spun rayon, alone or in combination with other fibers, produces a fabric which feels comfortable to wear, is wrinkle resistant, and offers unusual effects in color and texture.

**How to Judge Quality.** Rayon fabrics may be judged on the same basis as other fabrics. The quality of the yarns used and the manner in which they are woven determine the durability and general appearance of the fabric. Rayon fabrics which are made of firmly woven high quality yarns will give long and satisfactory service the same as other well-constructed fabrics, provided they are used and handled properly.

Rayon fibers take dyes readily. Consequently a great variety of colors and combinations of colors is possible. Color fastness depends upon the quality of the dyestuffs used and the process by which they are applied.

Improvements are being made in the finishing of rayon fabrics. There are many special finishes, some of which add to the serviceability of the fabric. The permanent, antcrease finish is an improvement devised to overcome the tendency of rayon to crease or wrinkle.

The reputation of the producer will be a factor in judging the quality or the amount of service the customer may expect to receive.

Many firms are producing rayon fabrics that are tested for strength, color fastness, shrinkage, etc. The salesperson should recommend rayons by their quality. The label identifies the fabric and its quality and is a guide to both the salesperson and the customer.

**How to Test Rayon Fabrics.** There are various tests which can be used to ascertain quality and to determine if the fabric is a mixture of rayon and other fibers.

The firmness of the weave may be tested by pulling the fabric between the fingers to see if the threads slip apart or separate. A loosely-woven piece of material will show a separation of threads, and this indicates weakness. In rayons especially, wrinkling or creasing tendencies may be determined by crushing or wrinkling the material in the hand. If the creases or wrinkles remain the fabric will be less desirable because of this tendency.

The burning test is a fairly accurate test in judging fabrics. Rayons, with the exception of acetate rayon, burn with a flash, like paper. One may detect the odor of burning wood, since wood pulp forms the basis for much of the rayon being manufactured. Acetate rayon, being different in process of manufacture, melts like sealing wax as it burns, and forms hard black beads. The beads are gummy while hot and brittle when cool.

If the material is a mixture of fibers, then it is necessary to unravel the threads. The lengthwise threads should be placed in a separate container from the crosswise threads. Burn each separately and notice the difference between them. For example, one set of yarns may burn like silk, the other like rayon. The fabric is a mixture of silk and rayon in this case.

**Care of Rayon Fabrics.** An understanding of the different types of rayon is necessary in order that advice as to their proper care can be given to purchasers of rayon materials. For example, it has already been mentioned that acetate rayons need special care in dry cleaning and should be handled only by reliable cleaning establishments. Certain materials respond better to dry cleaning than to washing.

Labels on better quality fabrics often contain washing or cleaning instructions. These instructions become the safest guide to follow in the care and handling of the materials.

**General Characteristics and Applied Selling Points.** Rayon is a serviceable fabric. Rayon fabrics which are well constructed may be

expected to give service and satisfaction. As in other fabrics, serviceability depends upon every phase of construction, which includes weaving, dyeing, and finishing. Rayon fabrics that are labeled "Washable" may be laundered. Proper care in both washing and dry cleaning will be a factor in the length of service rendered.

Rayon is a fashionable fabric. It is being used extensively in the manufacture of dress goods and ready-to-wear. It has been widely accepted by designers and fashion experts, who have adapted it to all purposes and occasions. A great variety of beautiful effects new to textiles have been created in fashioning rayons.

The types of rayon fabrics or combinations are practically unlimited. Because of this endless variety, fashionable garments and yard goods may be obtained in a broad range of prices. Thus it is possible to satisfy the prevailing desire for beautiful and fashionable clothes at moderate cost.

Good quality rayons are noted for their rich, jewel-like colors, and offer many unusual combinations and effects. The degree of color fastness is determined by standards in manufacture. Labels often indicate that the material is both sunfast and tubfast. White rayon materials retain their whiteness. They do not turn yellow with age or from laundering. This is a selling point strongly in favor of white rayon fabrics.

The fine choice of colors found in rayon materials is not their only appeal. There are, as well, several varieties of luster, depending upon the finish of the yarn and the weave, that prove attractive. The effect may be the soft luster of chiffon and crepe de Chine or the dull chalklike finish of crepe. Whatever the degree of luster obtained, it is permanent and will not be affected by wear, laundering, or dry cleaning.

There are also great variations in weave and texture which make it possible for the customer to select materials suitable for dresses or costumes for every occasion. Each season brings new and unusual effects in design, texture, and weave, many of which become fashion leaders in the world of textiles.

Rayons are also widely used in household furnishings. The characteristics described above make rayon fabrics or rayon combinations the ideal material for draperies, curtains, bedspreads, and upholstery. They combine excellent wearing qualities with rich



colors and interesting variations of texture. Rayon fabrics are favorites with interior decorators and homemakers in their efforts to bring beauty and harmony of color and design to the modern home.

The above selling points are applicable to rayon materials in general. The salesperson will endeavor to find additional information regarding the special types of rayon goods she sells.

#### WORD STUDY

flax	tussah
pliable	pongee
beetling	calendering
damask	moire
Madeira	viscose
elaborate	cellulose-acetate
synonymous	cuprammonium
filament	luster

## CHAPTER VII

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### A NON-TEXTILE MERCHANDISE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to show the student how to make a merchandise study. Certain phases of this procedure will be helpful to the student as a salesperson and as a consumer.

**Wide Variety of Non-textiles.** Non-textile merchandise embraces such a variety of products that it would be vain to attempt to cover here any one classification adequately enough to be of much benefit to the reader. Non-textile merchandise includes leather goods, jewelry, hardware, foods, soaps, cosmetics, and numerous other products found in stores.

It is understood that the person who sells shoes is not particularly interested in acquiring facts pertinent to foodstuffs. Likewise, those selling groceries, toilet goods or other lines of merchandise are interested chiefly in studies from which they may draw specific selling information. Since every student or beginning salesperson will need to study the particular line of goods which she is selling, it is considered necessary to give the reader an idea of how to proceed in making a merchandise study. To this end the remainder of the chapter will be given over to presentation of a merchandise study on gloves. The information will be given in outline form, which will serve as a model for the beginning salesperson to use in working out a similar study for the kind of goods she is selling.

The reader will observe that the form of the following study, and the topics to be included, follow in general those given early in Chapter V, in the paragraph captioned, "Fundamental Facts of Merchandise Information."

### MERCHANDISE STUDY OF GLOVES

#### I. HISTORY OR BACKGROUND

##### A. Historical data concerning the use of gloves

1. Significance in warfare.
2. Early styles and designs of gloves.
3. Development of present-day glove styles.
  - a. Historical influence on current styles.

## II. LEATHER GLOVES

### A. Types of Leather

1. Kidskin.
  - a. Characteristics: Thin, close, fine-grained, and flexible.
  - b. Use: Dress and formal wear.
2. Chamois.
  - a. Characteristics: Soft, porous, pliable. Suede finish. Creamy yellow in natural color.
  - b. Use: Women's tailored styles for dress or street wear. Men's street gloves.
3. Doeskin.
  - a. Characteristics: Soft, nappy, suede finish.
  - b. Use: Dress.
4. Cape.
  - a. Characteristics: Tight, close-grained. Durable.
  - b. Use: Women's and children's dress and tailored gloves. Heavier weight leathers in men's gloves.
5. Mocha.
  - a. Characteristics: Supple, velvety.
  - b. Use: Women's tailored gloves. Men's semiformal wear and business wear.
6. Calfskin.
  - a. Characteristics: Close, even grain; strong and durable. Rather heavy. Smooth, glossy surface.
  - b. Use: Men's gloves, or heavy, tailored women's gloves.
7. Lambskin.
  - a. Characteristics: Less durable than kidskin.
  - b. Use: Dress gloves.
8. Pigskin.
  - a. Characteristics: Spongy surface with bristle hole markings.
  - b. Use: Sport or driving gloves. Appropriate with casual street clothes.
9. Goatskin.
  - a. Characteristics: Tight, hard, pebbly grain.
  - b. Use: Street gloves.
10. Buckskin.
  - a. Characteristics: Porous, yet warm. Durable.
  - b. Use: Street or sports wear. White deerskin used for men's semiformal wear.

### B. Methods of Tanning

1. Chrome tanned.
  - a. Chrome tanned leathers are capeskin, goatskin, pigskin, and calfskin.
  - b. Chrome tanned leathers are washable.
2. Oil tanned.
  - a. Oil tanned leathers are chamois and buckskin.
  - b. Chamois is washable. Buckskin is not washable because of clay dyes used in the finishing process.

**B. Methods of Tanning—continued****3. Alum tanned.**

- a. Alum tanned leathers are kid, mocha, lamb, and domestic suede.
- b. Alum tanned leathers should be dry cleaned.

**C. Finishes****1. Glacé or grain finish.**

- a. Hair side of the skin is used.
- b. A smooth, semigloss finish.
- c. Glacé finish leathers are cape, calfskin, pigskin, lamb, kid, goat-skin, and grain deerskin.

**2. Suede finish.**

- a. Flesh side of the skin is used.
- b. Velvet or nappy finish.
- c. Suede finish leathers are buckskin, chamois, doeskin, mocha, imported suede, and domestic suede.

**D. Dyeing****1. Brush dyed.**

- a. The dye is applied to the leather by brushing or spraying the dye solution on the finished side only.
- b. The inside of gloves made from brush-dyed leathers are unstained. Fine kid and lambskin are brush dyed on a glass plate to keep the flesh side clean and white.

**2. Dip dyed.**

- a. The piece of leather is dipped in a dye bath.
- b. Both sides of the leather become stained.
- c. Color may rub off on the hands. This is known as crocking. Dyed suede leathers frequently crock. This is caused by tiny particles of nap adhering to the surface.

**E. Cutting****1. Table cutting.**

- a. Each piece of the glove is cut to exact measurements.
- b. Makes a perfect fitting glove.

**2. Pattern cutting.**

- a. Requires less skill than table cutting.

**3. Block cutting.**

- a. This method is used for inexpensive lined gloves.

**F. Sewing****1. Kinds of seams.**

- a. *Inseam*. Sewed inside out then turned. No raw edges are visible. Used for less expensive gloves.
- b. *Overseam*. Two edges placed together and sewed over and over on the right side. Not so strong since the edge is very narrow. Stitches are exposed to wear. Used for light leathers and dress gloves.
- c. *Piqué seam*. Outer edge of the leather held flat over the other edge and stitched down. Used in the finer gloves.

**F. Sewing—continued**

- d. *Saddlestitch seam.* Appears as hand sewing. Heavy thread is used. Used for pigskin and heavy cape gloves.

**G. Lining**

1. Materials used.
  - a. *Wool.* Used in driving and sports gloves.
  - b. *Fur.* Usually rabbit fur. Often dyed to resemble beaver or moleskin.
  - c. *Lamb's wool.* Used in heavy gloves.
  - d. *Fleece.* Knitted fabric of heavy cotton or wool yarns. Used in driving or for work gloves.
  - e. *Sueded fabrics.* Used to line street gloves.
  - f. *Leather.* Leather gloves are sometimes lined with light weight mocha or chamois.
  - g. *Silk.* Used for dress or street gloves.
2. Method of lining.
  - a. *Full lining.* An entire glove is made of the lining material and attached inside the outer glove.
  - b. *Skeleton lining.* The lining does not extend into the fourchettes (the sides of the glove fingers). Used in inexpensive gloves.
  - c. *Pasted lining.* Usually linings made of silk are pasted onto the leather before the glove is sewed. Used in dress and street gloves.

**III. FABRIC GLOVES****A. Cotton.**

1. Suedelike finish, produced by passing the cotton fabric between carborundum wheels.

**B. Silk.**

1. Glove silk is knitted by either of two processes.
  - a. *Tricot.*
  - b. *Milanese.*

**C. Rayon.**

1. Corded or patterned weaves.
  - a. Many variations in the stitching and trimmings.

**D. Wool.**

1. Knitted in various styles and bright colors.
  - a. Some resemble hand-knitted gloves.
  - b. Wool gloves and mittens popular for sports wear.

**IV. SIZE****A. Learn glove sizing system and range of sizes.**

1. Glove sizes vary according to materials.

**V. FITTING THE GLOVE****A. Determine size.**

1. Measure with tape measure around the palm of the hand.

V. FITTING THE GLOVE—*continued*

- a. Glove size should be the same size as the hand measures in inches.
2. Measure the glove on the hand.
  - a. Customer clenches the fist. Stretch the width of the back of the glove across the knuckles.
  - b. Measure the length of the middle finger of the glove with the customer's middle finger. They should measure the same.
- B. Putting on the gloves.
  1. Ask customer to rest her elbow on the counter.
  2. Slip the four fingers into the glove and slowly work the glove fingers down on each finger.
  3. Slip the thumb in and smooth the entire glove in place so that the seams and stitching are perfectly placed
  4. Stretch the thumb outward. If a web forms between the thumb and the palm, the glove is a misfit.
- C. How to remove gloves.
  1. Take gloves off easily and slowly, beginning at the wrist. Never pull gloves off by the fingers.
- D. Importance of a proper fit.
  1. The amount of wear and service is increased.
  2. Better appearance.
- E. Special points in fitting.
  1. Lined gloves usually are sold one-half size larger.
  2. Loose fitting gloves are warmer in winter because they allow for circulation.
  3. A snug fit is preferred for dress or formal wear.
  4. A loose fit is better for driving and sports.
  5. Never fit a glove too small.
  6. The right hand is slightly larger. Fit the gloves to the right hand.

## VI. STYLES—LADIES' GLOVES

- A. Semiformal Gloves.
  1. *Slip-on*. No opening or fastener.
  2. Novelty styles of medium length.
  3. Finer light weight leathers in suede or glacé finish.
- B. Formal Gloves.
  1. *Mousquetaire*. A long glove with opening at the wrist.
    - a. May vary in length.
  2. *Mitts*. For a touch of daintiness. Formal afternoon or evening wear.
- C. Business or Morning Wear.
  1. Tailored or pull-on styles.
  2. Durable leathers such as pigskin, cape, calfskin, chamois, and doeskin.
  3. Fabric gloves.
- D. Sports Wear.
  1. Gauntlet styles, slip-ons and mittens.

## VII. FASHION

### A. Current Vogue.

1. Points of current interest.
  - a. Latest or most popular color.
  - b. Most popular material or fabrics.
  - c. Design or style.

## VIII. SELLING POINTS—LADIES' GLOVES

### A. Specific selling points of outstanding features.

1. Quality of the leather and workmanship.
  - a. Softness, fineness of grain, suppleness.
  - b. Finish—velvety suedes or smooth glacé.
2. Special trimming effects
  - a. Novelty stitching or variations.
  - b. Design and finish of the cuffs.
  - c. Hand-rolled hems, pipings, or cordings.
  - d. Buttons or buckles.

### B. Effects of contrast or accents in color combinations.

### C. Matching with costume accessories.

### D. Washability.

### E. Cleaning.

## IX. SELLING POINTS—MEN'S GLOVES

### A. Suitability or appropriateness for the purpose intended.

1. *Mocha*. Suitable for semiformal wear. A fine velvety leather. Not appropriate for hard wear.
2. *Cape*. Appropriate for hard wear. Heavy capeskin for winter and a lighter weight for warm weather. Washable.
3. *Pigskin*. Durable. Harmonizes well with rough woollens or tweeds. Washable.
4. *Goatskin*. Durable. Washable.
5. *Calfskin*. Comfortable. Serviceable. Washable.
6. *Chamois*. Ideal gloves for men in warm weather. Light weight, porous, and absorbent.
7. *White deerskin*. Appropriate for semiformal wear.

### B. Color.

1. Harmonize or contrast as individual prefers.

### C. Style.

1. Slip-on styles are used for casual or sports wear.
2. Button gloves are for dress or business wear.

### D. Serviceability.

1. Facts about washability or cleaning.

## X. CARE OF GLOVES

### A. Proper care increases length of service.

1. Gloves should not be pulled on by the cuff.
2. Never press down between the fingers. Undue amount of strain causes thread to break and splits the seams.
3. Gloves which are damp should be left to dry before putting away.

**X. CARE OF GLOVES—*continued***

4. *Gloves should be smoothed out to natural form after being removed from the hand.*
- B. Washing instructions.
  1. Lukewarm suds. Wash *most gloves* on the hands. Rinse until water is clear. Roll in turkish towel to remove excess moisture. Dry slowly.
    - a. Chamois and doeskin gloves should be washed off the hands. Rinse in a clean, mild suds. This makes them softer when dry.
    - b. Dry slowly. (Never over a radiator.)
    - c. Work the leather gently to restore soft, smooth texture.
- C. Washable glove leathers are chamois, pigskin, cape, doeskin, and calfskin.
- D. Leathers which require dry cleaning are kid, lamb (either glace or kid finish), mocha, and buckskin.

**WORD STUDY**

chamois	tricot
suede	Milanese
mocha	glacé
crocking	doeskin





SELLING ON THE BASIS OF MERCHANDISE KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY EFFICIENT HANDLING  
AND DELIVERY OF GOODS MAKES FOR SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

*Courtesy of Marshall Field & Company, Chicago*

## CHAPTER VIII

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### SECURING INFORMATION ABOUT MERCHANDISE

The purpose of this chapter is to indicate the sources from which the student may obtain information for making a study of merchandise. A knowledge of these sources will prove useful to the student as a consumer or as a salesperson.

It is the aim of this chapter to give information that will be helpful in making a study of merchandise in which there is a particular interest.

With this thought in mind general sources of merchandise information are given. Publications are being issued regularly on merchandise, and the best of these may change at any time. Even though that is the case, the student should know where to turn for information. It is true that all of the general sources will not be applicable in every instance, but in the main they will be of value now or later.

A list of references by subjects will be included in the appendix. This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it will serve as an example of what study material is available.

**General Sources of Information.** General sources of merchandise information include (1) other salespeople, (2) buyers or supervisors in the department, (3) the manager of the smaller store, (4) customers, (5) advertisements, (6) special speakers and lecturers, (7) publishers, (8) government bureaus, (9) manufacturers, (10) universities, research organizations, (11) the library.

*Other Salespeople.* If the salesperson has the proper attitude, much can be learned from others who work in the same store or section. The beginner should have confidence, but at the same time should show appreciation of the aid and counsel of others.

Other salespeople have learned by experience what people ask and thus are able to anticipate questions and be prepared for them. Questions asked of other salespeople should be intelligent and timely, that is, they should reflect thought and earnestness and should be

asked when the person addressed has time to answer them properly.

*The Buyer or Other Supervisor.* A successful buyer must first of all know merchandise. Before even a single article is selected it is essential that the buyer be well informed on those features which make a product salable.

The buyer will have direct information from the manufacturer (or whatever the source of supply may be) on such details as quality, workmanship, and construction of the goods. The salespeople must be given this information and are to interpret it to the customer. For example, a brand of hose having the non-run feature has recently been placed in stock. Since the buyer will have information from the manufacturer on how this feature is produced, he will be able to explain the process to the hosiery salespeople. Customers are likely to ask how the hose are made to resist "runs," at least many of them will be interested in such an improved feature.

Buyers who travel extensively, or who purchase goods in foreign countries and from uncommon sources often disclose interesting bits of information in relating their ventures. Information of this kind from the buyer enhances the salesperson's appreciation and understanding of the merchandise and enlivens his interest.

The buyer is in a position to know merchandise and style trends months in advance and should keep salespeople informed of these trends. The salesperson will then be able to advise customers correctly on what is newest and most fashionable. Buyers who keep their sales force reliably informed are business minded and forward looking.

The assistant buyer should also be able to answer questions pertaining to merchandise. In the larger stores there may be times when the buyer has duties which demand so much time and attention that it becomes necessary for the salespeople to depend upon the assistant buyer for information. Questions which arise during the course of a sales interview must always be answered to the customer's satisfaction. The salesperson should never guess or make doubtful statements. The situation is handled much better when the salesperson says, "I'm sure our buyer (or assistant buyer) will be able to answer your question."

*Manager of the Small Store.* The duty of the manager of the small store is similar to that of the buyer or the assistant buyer in

the department store. The small store should be careful with respect to merchandise information. Often the basis of patronage in the smaller institution is service and this will not be effective if thoughtless and overready replies are made to customers' questions.

There is no reason why salespeople in the small store cannot be informed on merchandise if they and the manager realize how important this is. If, with regard to information, the large store follows a carefully planned program while the small store ignores or pays but casual attention to the matter, the disparity will reflect in poor sales for the small store.

The atmosphere of the store where salespeople are informed is pleasing. In addition, proper knowledge of merchandise on the part of the manager inspires confidence in his buying ability, which outcome is important to his success.

*Customers.* It has been stressed throughout this book that the salesperson should know important facts about merchandise in order to deal effectively with customers. Ordinarily the salesperson may be expected to know more about the merchandise than the customer. Many times, however, the salesperson will encounter a customer who knows a great deal about the particular merchandise being sold. This contingency will depend upon circumstance. For example, if the salesperson is selling costly art objects she may have customers who are widely traveled and who have made these articles a hobby. In such case the customer is likely to know more about the merchandise than the salesperson. Also, there are those who are specialists in the field to which the merchandise pertains. Home economics teachers, for example, will be well versed on fabrics and other articles which pertain to clothing and the home.

In these instances, if the salesperson will show a sincere interest in what the customer has to say, she may learn much. People who through interest or by earnest study have gained authoritative knowledge about merchandise usually are not adverse to sharing their knowledge as a matter of pride, and, if the salesperson is sincere, she will be interested. The salesperson can learn from customers, though this means of securing merchandise information is to be considered only supplemental to her own efforts.

*Advertisements.* Advertisements are written usually by specialists who have carefully considered the points about an article

which should be valuable in selling it. Many times these advertisements carry valuable merchandise information. This applies to competitors' advertisements as well as to those of your own store.

*Special Speakers or Lecturers.* The opportunity to take advantage of this source of merchandise information will depend upon the community in which the salesperson lives. In cities of considerable size the opportunities are many, as for example special lectures given at clubs, universities, and other organizations. One large store made it possible for its salespeople to attend a series of lectures by an authority on one type of merchandise handled.

As the educational level is raised, whether by formal methods or otherwise, salespeople will be more than ever desirous of taking advantage of all means of improving themselves. Realization of the fact that progress depends a great deal upon knowledge and its proper application is growing.

*Nature of Supplementary Material.* The study material discussed in the remainder of this chapter has been carefully selected. Available information has been chosen because of its merit and low cost. There are many sources available that are not listed, but those presented will serve as a good foundation and show the possibilities. Often the cost of collecting reference books is a serious obstacle to the pursuit of study. The plan outlined here helps to meet this difficulty. Sources and information are constantly changing. Those given, for the most part, have the advantage of being recent.

Where study is being carried on in classes, it might be considered desirable for each member to secure material which will be of interest to the whole class. Books and informational matter of various kinds may be exchanged, thus providing necessary study material at small expense.

Requests can be combined under direction of the teacher, thereby saving correspondence and mailing expense for both the sender and the class. This is especially true where material is sent free of charge. Too, it is one way by which appreciation may be shown to those who extend courtesies.

*Publishers.* The Merchandise Education Department of *Good Housekeeping Magazine* for the past two years has been supplying sales training material for the purpose of providing salespeople in retail stores with factual information about the merchandise they

sell. These bulletins and manuals have been written in collaboration with leading manufacturers and industries. They are authoritative and are written from the selling point of view.

Due to increased demand, this service has been expanded to include schools interested in service of this kind. Each instructor, upon request, is provided with two copies free of charge. Additional copies for students will be sent for a small charge covering the costs of printing and mailing only.

A list of these bulletins and manuals will be sent upon request. The following titles are illustrative: *Cotton Fibers and Fabrics*, *Wool and Wool Fabrics*, *Educational Aids in Selling Men's Shirts*, and *Color in Dress*. Classified references in the bibliography name many of these publications. This is excellent material.

*The Shoe Salesman's Manual*, published by Gill Publications, Inc., 111 Summer Street, Boston, Massachusetts, is a well-illustrated and authoritative book on shoe construction and materials, which offers practical helps and suggestions for fitting and selling shoes. It is especially recommended for those engaged in selling shoes and foot-gear of all kinds.

**Government Publications.** The research bureaus of the United States Department of Agriculture and Department of Commerce issue bulletins which pertain specifically to definite lines of merchandise. Such material forms an important source of merchandise information. The United States Bureau of Standards also has available material regarding tests which are made to determine strength, durability, and other qualities of various products.

**The United States Department of Agriculture.** The Department of Agriculture circulates a wide variety of bulletins, covering topics too numerous to list here. A list of the available publications will be sent free upon request by writing to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. The student may consult this list to find what material is offered pertaining to the subject or line of merchandise in which he is interested.

A few of those which are of special value to salespeople are discussed below. The bulletins mentioned in the following paragraph were prepared by the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture.

"The Selection of Cotton Fabrics," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1449*,

is an excellent source of information on cotton and cotton fabrics, including fabric construction, types of weaves, finishing, and dyeing. "Floors and Floor Coverings," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1219*, discusses common types of rugs and carpets, and also linoleum. Floor coverings such as Brussels, Wilton, Velvet, Axminster, and Oriental rugs are adequately described. Also important information on the care and cleaning of floor coverings is given. "Window Curtaining," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1633*, contains a thorough discussion on curtain fabrics, kinds and uses, also principles of line, color, and symmetry as applied to window curtaining. Salespeople in this line of merchandise find such information necessary and useful. "Guides for Buying Sheets, Blankets, and Bath Towels," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1765*, gives definite information regarding these articles of merchandise, including construction, durability, and how to judge quality. The labeling system is discussed, which discussion is of material advantage to salespeople. The Bureau of Chemistry of the Department of Agriculture has prepared a bulletin, "Leather Shoes: Selection and Care," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1523*, which will be of interest to shoe salesmen. The bulletin includes shoe leathers, methods of shoe construction, how to select shoes, and suggestions as to their proper care and repair.

The Consumers' Counsel Division of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration issues a publication, *Consumers' Guide*. This magazine is issued every two weeks and, as the name implies, contains articles of interest and concern to every consumer, which makes it of interest to salespeople. For example, in Volume IV, No. 26, March 28, 1938, is the article, "Rayon Comes of Age," which is a worth while source of information on recent developments in the rayon industry. Address all inquiries regarding this to Editor, *Consumers' Guide*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

**The United States Department of Commerce.** The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the United States Department of Commerce has issued a Textile Reading List, which is an excellent bibliography of recent books and current magazine articles on textiles, covering the various phases of the industry from the raw material to the marketing of the finished product. The student should consult this list when material on silk, wool, cotton, linen, or rayon

is desired. The list does not include government publications on textiles. There is a separate bulletin entitled, "Government Publications Relating to Textiles," which lists only those issued by the government.

One of the most valuable publications for salespeople from the Department of Commerce has been prepared by the National Committee on Wood Utilization. It is entitled, "Furniture: Its Selection and Use." This is a complete and interesting report dealing with the construction, period styles, utility, and care of all types of furniture. It is recommended as a reference in a merchandise study concerning this subject.

**Manufacturers.** The educational publications and other descriptive material furnished by the manufacturer are a logical source of merchandise information. These may include advertising material sent out by the manufacturer; facts pertaining to the process of manufacture or the raw material used; guarantees for service and use; or special publications for salespeople designed as selling aids. Many of the leading manufacturers of nationally advertised products have available material of this kind. The American Viscose Corporation, 200 Madison Avenue, New York City, has prepared educational material on the manufacture of rayon, among which is a book entitled *The Story of Rayon*. Another one of their publications is a smaller booklet, *What Is Rayon?* Either of these books will furnish interesting material on the manufacture of rayon, its characteristics, and other facts concerning its use and care.

The American Bemberg Corporation, 261 Fifth Avenue, New York City, has manuals entitled *Enjoyment Values in Fabrics*, and *D. P.'s of Salesmanship*, both of which have been prepared to assist in solving important selling problems. The same company also has a booklet, *Knitted Fabrics*, which gives information on knitted fabrics and hosiery.

Cannon Mills, Inc., 70 Worth Street, New York City, issues a publication, *Cannon Shots*, for towel and sheet salespeople. A little manual, *How You Can Sell More Towels*, also gives basic sales instruction on bath towels. Back numbers of the former can sometimes be secured. The latter is available for school use. Both are helpful in many ways.



In answer to numerous requests from students and salespeople for information on the manufacture of cotton goods, The Pepperel Manufacturing Company, Boston, Massachusetts, prepared a booklet, *Cotton from Plant to Product*, which is written in a nontechnical and highly instructive manner and is especially recommended as a source of information for anyone interested in cotton or cotton goods. This organization has prepared an interesting exhibit on cotton which is designed to be used with the booklet.

The home economics department of the Hoover Company, North Canton, Ohio, has prepared material which contains merchandise information on rugs and carpets as well as on electric cleaners. Home Economics Bulletin No. 1, *Carpets and Rugs*, for example, gives excellent material on the construction of various types of rugs. This organization has recently prepared new material on consumer buying which consists of a Teachers' Handbook and a small leaflet, *How to Judge Values in Choosing an Electric Cleaner*.

Another book of value to the salesperson handling rugs or carpets is the *Hand-Book of Rugs and Carpets*, published by the Mohawk Carpet Mills, Amsterdam, New York.

The educational bureau of Lever Brothers Company, Cambridge, Massachusetts, publishes each month a series of bulletins entitled "True Sales Experiences." These bulletins include merchandise information as well as many other points connected with selling various articles. Your retailing teacher or the store in which you work can secure this valuable source of information. These bulletins furnish important facts about merchandise, together with selling points and helpful suggestions on how to increase sales.

The home economics department of Procter and Gamble, Ivorydale, Ohio, has valuable material available to teachers and students. A series of free leaflets includes, "How to Wash Gloves," "How to Wash Blankets," and others. These washing leaflets have been designed especially for the use of salespeople and consumers, but may also be secured by your school.

Swift and Company, Chicago, issues numerous agricultural research bulletins which discuss various phases of the meat packing industry. In answers to many requests for material which will help in identifying the different cuts of meats, this company has prepared pamphlets showing the standard wholesale and retail cuts of beef,

pork, and lamb, which should prove valuable to those engaged in selling meats. (See Bibliography for these specific bulletins.)

The Hershey Chocolate Corporation, Hershey, Pennsylvania, has prepared an interesting chart and other material on chocolate and cocoa which can be secured by your school.

Interesting booklets on food products have been published by the American Can Company, Home Economics Department, 230 Park Avenue, New York City. Titles such as, *The Story of Salmon*, *The Story of Pineapple*, and *The Story of Coffee*, indicate the nature of the material. One copy of each of these publications may be obtained by the class teacher.

Booklets have been prepared on food products by the National Cannery Association, Washington, D. C. Some of the titles are *Canned Peas*, *Canned Pears*, and *Canned Berries*. This educational material is available to teachers or school libraries in amounts sufficient for reference, and may be obtained upon request.

**Universities, Research Organizations, and Others.** The government has issued a bulletin which contains information regarding the many activities carried on by various organizations. The latest one is entitled, *Market Research Sources*, 1936 Edition. This bulletin is published by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the United States Department of Commerce. It may be secured from the United States Government Printing Office for 25 cents. The retailing student who is sufficiently interested can find references in this publication to many studies which pertain to retail selling.

It might be well to consider the work of a few outstanding organizations that furnish valuable material at a low cost. The University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has a research bureau for retail training. For a number of years this bureau has made an extensive study of the pertinent questions which customers ask. This information has been assembled in a series of twenty-seven manuals entitled *Merchandise Facts*. Each manual covers a specific selling department as the following titles indicate: *Lamps*, *Glassware*, *Neckwear and Scarfs*, and *Infants' Wear*. These publications may be secured at a small cost. Other titles will be found in the Bibliography.

The School of Retailing of New York University, New York City, also carries on a cooperative program in training students for

retailing positions. *The Journal of Retailing* is published by the school and contains much that is of interest to students and those actually engaged in retailing.

The University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, has publications that are of value and interest as, for example, one entitled *250 Ideas for Increasing Retail Sales*.

These are but a few of the many sources of merchandise information and selling ideas that may be found among the colleges and universities of this country.

The Household Finance Corporation, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, has published a series of booklets on better purchasing. They may be secured for a small sum to cover mailing costs. These booklets contain well-prepared information that is valuable to consumers and salespeople alike. Specific titles will be found in the list of publications later in this chapter. A few titles such as *Sheets, Blankets, Table Linen, and Towels; Shoes, Meat, and Automobile Tires*, will serve to illustrate the scope of this worthwhile endeavor to furnish information on leading lines of merchandise.

The American Home Economics Association, Mills Building, Washington, D. C., has published material containing merchandise information for consumers and salespeople. The Consumer Purchasing Series with titles such as *When You Buy Sheets, When You Buy Blankets, and When You Buy Hosiery*, are illustrative of the material available from this source.

The Associated Wool Industries, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City, has prepared a chart entitled *Wool and Mohair*, which is available to students at a small cost. This material is an excellent source of information on wool.

*The Art of Glove Making*, a book prepared by the National Association of Leather Glove Manufacturers, Inc., Gloversville, New York, is a complete and comprehensive study of gloves and should be carefully studied by everyone interested in gloves.

The International Silk Guild, Inc., 250 Fifth Avenue, New York City, has a publication entitled, *The Story of Silk*. It is carefully illustrated and is very enlightening in connection with the silk industry. This organization also has an interesting exhibit on silk which may be secured by your school.

The Cotton-Textile Institute, Inc., 320 Broadway, New York

City, has prepared material upon cotton and cotton fabrics. This material could be secured by your teacher or, if you are employed, by the store in which you work.

The National Live Stock and Meat Board, 407 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois, has published booklets on meat. For example, *Cashing in on Lamb*, *Cashing in on Beef*, and *Cashing in on Pork*, are carefully illustrated and contain valuable information on the subject of handling meats. They may be secured for a minimum charge.

The California Fruit Growers Exchange, Los Angeles, California, has recently published *The Story of California Oranges and Lemons*. This well-illustrated booklet will give the reader a better understanding of the citrus industry, together with information on the food and health values of citrus fruits and suggestions for their use. This is an important source of information for the salesperson handling these products.

The Homemakers' Foundation, a division of Sears, Roebuck and Company, has prepared the *Consumers' Shopping Guide*. This is composed of cards which hold samples of various kinds of fabrics. Distinguishing characteristics, points in quality determination, appropriate use, and what to look for when buying are given. A handbook of facts is included as well as a magnifying glass for close inspection of fabrics. This is an excellent piece of work and will prove helpful in studying textiles.

The National Retail Dry Goods Association, 101 West 31st Street, New York City, has prepared merchandise manuals that were written especially for the purpose of providing more complete information on merchandise. The titles of some of the available manuals are *A B C's of Informative Selling*; *Cosmetics, Toiletries, and Perfumes*, and *Shoes*. The cost of these is small considering their quality.

The Hammermill Paper Company, Erie, Pennsylvania, has prepared suggestions for the study of paper and paper making which are worth while. The Hammermill educational and exhibit material is sold to schools and students for a nominal price to cover part of its cost.

**Libraries.** There are reference books on practically every subject, and information on nearly all of the leading types of merchandise can be found by intelligent use of the library. Library books are

classified in the card catalogue under the author's name or by subject or title. If the author's name is not known, books may be found by looking under the general subject heading. For example, if the student desires information on glassware, the various books on this subject will be listed in alphabetical order under this general heading.

Periodicals and current magazines often have articles and worthwhile material related to merchandise or merchandise information. These articles are listed and classified in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Students should become familiar with this and other means of finding references in order to be able to use the library to better advantage.

An excellent little book entitled, *Find It Yourself*, Student's Edition, published by the H. W. Wilson Company, 950 University Avenue, New York City, has been prepared to aid students in using the library in an intelligent manner. The cost is low and it would be helpful not only for the study of retail subjects but for other studies as well.

The list of available merchandise information given in the Bibliography covers many lines of merchandise. It will be found helpful if requests for desired material are pooled and letters written for prices and other information before the order is placed. This saves time as well as mailing and handling expense.

#### WORD STUDY

basic	manual
atmosphere	bibliography
supplementary	research
collaboration	comprehensive

## CHAPTER IX

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### ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS FOR RETAIL SELLING

It is frequently asserted that graduates of the schools of our country do not use principles of English and arithmetic effectively.

Ability in English and arithmetic has wide application in selling. This chapter has for its purpose the supplementing of instruction already received in these two important subjects.

**Importance of Good Speech.** Many people in business are handicapped by lack of facility in speech. Because one is handicapped by faulty speech habits does not mean one can do nothing but admit the deficiency and accept the situation. The successful business man endeavors to overcome such an obstacle. A specific example comes to mind. A progressive professional man was dissatisfied with his speech. He desired to acquire the ability to express himself effectively—an ability important to his profession. Some time ago he joined a group of men who also were interested in improving their speech, and under the guidance of a capable teacher remarkable progress was made. He now is not only more effective in his conversation, but has gained real ability as a speaker before interested groups. Undoubtedly this improvement will do much to forward his career. Even where a serious speech defect is present great improvement can be made under competent teachers. An intelligent man has the handicap of stuttering to the extent that it is quite noticeable. He has made some progress because of sterling qualities and common sense, but has been held back considerably by this speech defect.

Although most people do not suffer a handicap as serious as stuttering, too frequently the voice lacks quality and color. There are many phases of this important topic and we shall endeavor to cover briefly the most important.

**Enunciation.** The function of enunciation is to give distinctness to speech. Enunciation is an important factor and students should endeavor to overcome the careless habits which mar the quality of their speech.

**Tone.** This is the factor that seems to express the feelings of the speaker. The listener is likely to react to it either favorably or unfavorably. It is true that many people have a tone that may be said to be unvaried, and as a result their voices sound monotonous. Harshness or seeming weakness of tone are also factors which should be corrected if necessary.

**Loudness.** To be clear and expressive does not require loudness. The speech of good radio announcers is an example of clarity and modulation. The radio announcer does not talk loudly, yet his enunciation is clear and his voice highly expressive. It is well to get into the habit of talking quietly, yet distinctly, and without strain.

**Being Distinct and Careful in Speech.** There is a definite tendency for many people to speak indistinctly and carelessly. The following list of words and phrases shows what often happens in their use:

<i>eating</i>	becomes	<i>eatin'</i>
<i>get</i>	becomes	<i>gil</i>
<i>going</i>	becomes	<i>goin'</i>
<i>yes</i>	becomes	<i>yea</i>
<i>pretty</i>	becomes	<i>purty</i>
<i>doing</i>	becomes	<i>doin'</i>
<i>What are you doing?</i>	becomes	<i>What you doin'?</i>
<i>being</i>	becomes	<i>bein'</i>
<i>writing</i>	becomes	<i>writin'</i>
<i>arithmetic</i>	becomes	<i>'rithmetic</i>

These are but a few of the words that are misused. They serve, however, as an example of careless speech. These errors are due largely to haste. Speaking too rapidly is one of the factors which is harmful to effective speech. Haste is the order of the day, and far too commonly it is reflected in our speech.

Though the principles of good speech can only be touched upon in this text, the student should realize the important effect of speech with regard to success in selling. If possible, the student should supplement study in retail selling by instruction in speaking.

**Pronunciation.** The list of words given in the preceding paragraph brings up the question of pronunciation. A point to be stressed in learning pronunciation is the necessity of securing a standard dictionary and using it. Whenever words are encountered which are not known, use the dictionary to learn the correct meaning and pro-

nunciation. In this way new words are added to your vocabulary. Incorrect pronunciation reveals a lack of education and culture and causes those with whom one is talking to lose confidence. Often criticism of people who have attended high schools and colleges is made because of their poor English and spelling. It is urged, therefore, that the student earnestly watch these important matters and work out a definite program to overcome his weaknesses.

**Simple Words.** Men of high position often express themselves in simple language. An analysis of President Roosevelt's inaugural address of 1932 showed that approximately 70 per cent of the vocabulary used falls among the first 500 most common words. Further analysis shows that 74.2 per cent of the vocabulary of the same address is among the first 1000 common words. The thousand most common words would include 85.5 per cent of the vocabulary used in Lincoln's Gettysburg address.<sup>1</sup>

The individual is unwise who endeavors to use words which, though perhaps technically correct, are difficult for the average person to understand. Also, there is always the danger of embarrassment from misusing words which are above the level of the one attempting to use them. The words used should be adapted to the listener. The quality of appropriateness in words is very important. In order to have the power of adapting words to one's listeners it is necessary that the vocabulary be ample. When a new word is heard its meaning should be learned and its application in a sentence studied. When the proper occasion arises the word can be used and gradually it will become a part of the vocabulary. Wide reading is valuable from the standpoint of vocabulary building if words are studied with respect to their application.

**Other Qualities of Words.** The words used should be correct. Correctness implies the right word for the thought that is being expressed. It also implies the right form of that word, as, for example, using the proper tense of the verb.

In order to be precise and to use specific and concrete words one must have a vocabulary which shows the results of careful study and observation.

The following article entitled, "Perfect Your Conversation,"

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<sup>1</sup> Richard S. Schultz, "President Roosevelt's Vocabulary," *School and Society*, XXXIX (June 23, 1934), pp. 813-814.



not only emphasizes the importance of conversation, but is itself an example of the effective use of well-chosen words:

Between the great Chevrolet Motor Company and the public is a chain of conversation. If the conversation is printed, we call it advertising. If it is brought to the public by way of talking pictures, we call it mass salesmanship. But if it is brought to the public from a salesman to a prospect, we call it selling. And selling is most important of all.

So I say to our men, and I think it applies to every salesman, "Improve the quality and quantity of your conversation." For these conversations are the most important factor in moving merchandise. If the conversations are poor—if they are dull and uninteresting, the best product on earth fails to sell. If they are good—if they tell a real factual, interesting, thrilling story, the product moves.

We must perfect every sentence we utter. We must pack every moment of conversation with demonstrable facts. And we must follow each conversation with the right kind of demonstration. We must remember that the public is slow to accept new ideas. In my opinion, one of the most important features ever added to motor cars is knee-action. But the public accepted it only as a fact as salesmen made convincing demonstrations.

So I repeat—improve the quality and quantity of every conversation and follow each conversation with a convincing demonstration. For conversation is the only thing between any company and its customer. If the conversation is bad—if there is too little of it, the product fails to sell.<sup>1</sup>

**Overworked Words.** Consideration of vocabulary brings to mind the subject of overworked words. A list of such words and phrases would include *beautiful, smart, stunning, good-looking, stylish, lovely, grand, fierce, swell, and fine*. Now there are occasions when certain of these words have appropriate application, but care should be observed in their use. To make extensive use of these and many other words indicates lack of thought and care.

**Haste.** One of the chief factors which bring about the difficulties we have been considering is haste. It seems that in many respects we do not build for permanence today. A song, however popular, is soon forgotten. A book becomes a best seller, but may last but a short while in the minds of the public. Possibly because of this swift change tasks are done hurriedly and our manner of speaking and writing too commonly reflects the tempo of the day. This haste, to some extent perhaps, makes for progress, which no one desires to retard. The best thing, of course, is for the young person to develop good work habits and, despite the hurry of modern life, determine not to overlook the important values of life. The spoken and written

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<sup>1</sup> W. E. Holler, "Perfect Your Conversation," *American Business*, VII (June, 1937), p. 25.

word should be used carefully. They should reflect thought and balance on the part of the speaker.

**Slang.** This form of expression reflects carelessness and indifference. Even though slang does sometimes express the exact thought, one should never allow the vocabulary to depend upon it. Slang expressions usually do not last; therefore in the relatively short time they are useful it would prove more profitable to acquire a permanent vocabulary.

**Merchandise Terms.** Much consideration is being given to standardization of merchandise terms, with the idea of simplifying. It has been proposed that a dictionary of merchandise terms be prepared for retailers, with a companion edition for the use of consumers. Such a dictionary would give the manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, and consumer a common basis of understanding and be a valuable aid in buying. (England already has a handbook which makes the meaning of merchandise terms clear.<sup>1</sup>)

The proposed dictionary is a step beyond technically correct English, but it is felt that the student should know something about its possibilities in connection with more exact buying, which is the present trend. In the meantime, while such a development is being considered, the salesperson should be careful to be exact in giving merchandise information to the customer. This means that she shall know the merchandise thoroughly, and be precise in explaining its qualities. Here, again, careful language is essential.

**New Selling Words.** New selling words, in many cases, may be added to the vocabulary by a study of the material prepared by the manufacturers. Labels on merchandise and containers contain words that can be used in the sales talk. Magazine, newspaper, and radio advertising also contribute usable terms and apt descriptions.

**Word Habits That Reduce Sales.** The next time you make a purchase in a retail store observe what the salesperson asks you after the sale is made. Sometimes questions are asked such as, "Will that be all?", "Is there anything else?", or "Something else today?" What is your reaction to questions such as these? Are you not immediately on the defensive with an emphatic "No"? Would not the question, "What else, please?" be better? Let us analyze it. It is not so easy

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<sup>1</sup> T. L. Blanke, "A Dictionary of Merchandise Terms," *Industrial Standardization*, VIII (June, 1937), pp. 173-177.

to say no to this question. Also it may stimulate thought and remind the customer of items he may have had in mind before entering the store. For these reasons the latter question is often much better than the first three considered.

In the use of sentences for suggestion selling the salesperson should endeavor to arouse the customer's interest. Make her think. One of the ways to do this is to arouse her curiosity. For example, let us say that you are selling a brand of soap chips that is above the average in quality. In the household supplies section if a customer has already been sold, let us say a kitchen utensil, the question, "Would you like to reduce the time necessary for washing dishes?" is likely to arouse her curiosity. Then proceed to explain the effectiveness of your soap preparation.

Is that not better than asking, "Don't you need some soap chips today?" It is obvious, of course, that the product chosen for suggestion selling should have the merit claimed for it. Otherwise dissatisfaction will result.

Another instance of where the use of words may be important is in regard to delivery. Delivering merchandise costs money, and customers may be unmindful of this fact. In order to keep down deliveries, which of the two questions that follow do you think is most suggestible? "Shall we send it?" or "You will take it with you?" You will notice there is a question mark after the latter sentence though it sounds as if it were a statement. The sentence should be uttered somewhat as a question in order not to make the suggestion obvious. It can be said, however, in such a way as to have suggestive value.

Another helpful use of words in selling is to suggest positive rather than negative statements. Suggest the good points of merchandise. Say "This watch is shock-proof" rather than "This watch will not be harmed by hard use."

Be careful to avoid exaggeration. Do not say, "It is wonderful on you," when you mean, "It is attractive." Exaggeration in retail selling, as elsewhere, causes the customer to lose confidence in the judgment of the salesperson.

Use of the word "cheap" should always be avoided. An item may be "inexpensive" "less expensive" or "moderately priced," but it should never be called cheap.

**Effective Selling Words.** A list of effective words used in de-

scribing merchandise will be helpful to the student provided their application to specific items and situations is correct.

A good command of descriptive words will strengthen the sales talk to a marked extent. Such facility gives tone and dignity to speech and reflects thought and training. It will aid in building the indispensable quality of confidence. The list follows:

In describing color use words such as:

appropriate	cool	flowerlike	pleasing
artistic	correct	harmonious	popular
attractive	dainty	inconspicuous	practical
becoming	deep	interesting	rare
bright	delightful	light	rich
brilliant	dull	live	seasonable
changeable	dignified	lovely	sensible
charming	distinctive	modern	suitable
clear	exquisite	new	unusual
colorful	fascinating	novel	vivid
conservative	fashionable	original	warm

In discussing styles use words such as:

artistic	durable	graceful	practical
attractive	dignified	improved	sensible
becoming	distinctive	latest	simple
businesslike	effective	new	slenderizing
charming	excellent	novel	striking
comfortable	exclusive	original	suitable
conservative	fashionable	pleasing	superior
correct	feminine	popular	tailored

The quality of the material may be described by such words as:

choice	exceptional	indestructible	strong
comfortable	firm	patented	sturdy
dependable	genuine	reliable	substantial
desirable	improved	rich	superior
different	heavy	serviceable	washable
excellent	ideal	silky	well finished

In discussing workmanship use words such as:

choice	exquisite	indestructible	serviceable
dependable	fancy	ingenious	strong
desirable	faultless	pleasing	sturdy
distinctive	firm	reliable	substantial
durable	homemade	satisfactory	superior
exceptional	improved	sensible	unusual

It should be emphasized that merely reading this list of words will not be sufficient. Use the words in sentences after consulting

the dictionary with regard to those about which you are doubtful. Make them part of your vocabulary. The list will provide a good foundation in building a selling vocabulary.

**Grammar in the Store.** It is assumed that those who study this book have had a basic course in English. Students who are in position to do so should correlate what they have learned in English with their study of retailing subjects. The principles of correct written and spoken English are applicable to the language needed for situations one meets in retail selling.

In order to help you avoid common conversational difficulties, review briefly the fundamentals of English grammar and also the errors most commonly heard.

**The Pronoun.** A pronoun stands for a noun. Let us consider errors we sometimes hear in the use of pronouns. For example, it is correct to say, "Everybody knows how *he* should act in that case." Everybody appears to be plural but in reality refers to but one person. In this instance since everybody is singular the pronoun "he" is used instead of the plural form.

Many errors are made in connection with the use of the pronouns "me" and "I." It is correct to say, "The head of stock and *I* are going." The pronoun "I" is a part of the subject and, therefore, is in the nominative case. Also, note that the personal pronoun "I" correctly follows the noun "head," which is part of the subject. The speaker refers to himself last in a case of this kind.

It is right to say, "It is *I*." After all forms of the verb "to be" which includes "is" the nominative case is used. The pronoun "I" is in the nominative case.

In the sentence, "The sale helped my department and *me*," the pronoun "me" is the object of the verb "helped" and, therefore, is in the objective case.

The pronouns "who" and "whom" cause a great deal of difficulty. It is correct to say, "He knows the salesperson *who* sold the item." In this case the pronoun "who" is the subject of the verb sold.

It is correct to say, "We hope you will like the salesperson *whom* we have sent." The word *whom* in this sentence is the object of the verb sent. What about this sentence: "I shall decide for *whoever* is best known"? The pronoun "whoever" is correct because its form is determined by the words that follow it. In this instance the pro-

noun "whoever" is the subject of the verb "is." Also in connection with pronouns, remember that "who" refers to persons, while "which" refers to things. It is correct to say, "I saw the man *who* was here," and, "I saw the truck *which* delivered the merchandise."

The pronoun "that" is used in referring to persons or things, while the pronoun "which" refers only to things.

Say, "I like *those* books." A demonstrative adjective such as "those" should be used in this sentence.

**Uses of Verbs.** A verb asserts action. Always be sure that the number of the verb agrees with its subject. It is correct to say, "On the shelf *were* some groceries." The noun "groceries" which is plural is the subject of the verb "were." Notice this sentence, "The size of the cans *varies*." The subject in this sentence is the noun "size" and not "cans."

Also, in the use of verbs, watch their tense carefully. It is correct to say, "He *gave* us two salesbooks." The past tense is necessary and the verb "gave" should be used for this reason. The verbs "saw" and "seen" sometimes cause difficulty. Say, "I *saw* the stock list." The verb "seen" is used only with "have" or "has." In connection with the proper use of the past tense and past participle the following list of verbs <sup>1</sup> is given:

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
awake	awoke	awaked
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
burst	burst	burst
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
dive	dived	dived
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
flee	fled	fled
flow	flowed	flowed
fly	flew	flown
freeze	froze	frozen
go	went	gone
hang	hung (an object)	hung

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *Actual Business English*, by P. H. Deffendall (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922).

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
hang	hanged (a person)	hanged
know	knew	known
lose	lost	lost
loose	loosed	loosed
plead	pleaded	pleaded
prove	proved	proved
ride	rode	ridden
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
see	saw	seen
show	showed	shown
shine	shown	shone
shrink	shrank	shrunk
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
slay	slew	slain
speak	spoke	spoken
steal	stole	stolen
swim	swam	swum
tear	tore	torn
throw	threw	thrown
wear	wore	worn
write	wrote	written

Often there is confusion in the mind of the student as to the uses of "shall" and "will." The principal thing to remember in this connection is that the use of the verb "will" with the pronoun "I" or "we" expresses determination. The use of "shall" with "I" or "we" expresses simple future. The following will perhaps help:

#### For Simple Future

I shall	We shall
You will	You will
He, she, or it will	They will

#### For Promise or Determination

I will	We will
You shall	You shall
He, she, or it shall	They shall

If it is kept in mind that saying "we will" or "I will" expresses determination or promise, no difficulty should be experienced in correctly using the verbs "will" and "shall." In general the use of "should" and "would" follows the same principle as "shall" and "will" since the latter verbs are the past tense of the former ones.

"Can" and "may" sometimes cause difficulty. Remember that "can" means that one is able or has the power to do some stated thing. In the question, "Can I do it?" the power to perform is being questioned. "May I do it?" is asking permission to do something. Also, keep in mind that "might" and "could" follow the same general rules as "may" and "can."

Learn the principal parts of these verbs and when they should be used:

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
lie	lay	lain
lay	laid	laid
sit	sat	sat
set	set	set
rise	rose	risen
raise	raised	raised

*Remember:<sup>1</sup>*

Lie means to rest.

Lay means to place an object.

Sit means to occupy a seat.

Set means to place something.

Rise means to get up.

Raise means to lift an object.

*These sentences are examples of correct usage:*

She lay down to rest yesterday. (Past tense of lie)

She laid the salesbook on the counter. (Past tense of lay)

She sat in the lunchroom. (Past tense of sit)

She set the basket on the counter. (Past tense of set)

She rose early in order to get to work on time. (Past tense of rise)

She raised the counter display to make it more effective. (Past tense of raise)

**Adverbs and Adjectives.** An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb.

An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun.

If you really understand those definitions and will give the use of adjectives and adverbs careful thought, little difficulty should be experienced in their use.

Remembering that adverbs tell how, when, where, and how much is a simple device for properly using them.

It is correct to say, "She drove *slowly* and *carefully*." The adverbs "slowly" and "carefully" modify the verb "drove." "It

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *Actual Business English*, by P. H. Deffendall (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922).



was a very *slow* car" is correct because the adjective "slow" in this case modifies the noun "car."

Adjectives and adverbs should be placed as near as possible to the word or words that they modify. It is correct to say, "I need *only* a few dollars." Notice that "only" is placed after "need," the verb it modifies rather than the pronoun "I."

The word "healthy" is often used when "healthful" is meant. It is right to say, "The food was healthful." Healthy is not correctly used in describing objects. It is used to describe one's state of health as, "This is a healthy child."

**Prepositions and Conjunctions.** Conjunctions and prepositions are often confused. For example, it is correct to say, "They do not sell *as* we do." The word "like" in place of "as" is incorrect. The wrong preposition is often used. It is correct to say, "He stays *at* home." The preposition "to" would be incorrect in the sentence.

**Other Common Errors.** The double negative is commonly heard. For example, "He is *hardly* experienced enough to sell." The use of the word "isn't" in this sentence would be incorrect. It is correct to say "John sold that." It is not correct to use the pronoun "he" after the subject noun John in this sentence.

It is correct to say, "The salesman was the first person to find out the situation." The word "first" should not be used in this sentence between the word "to" and the word "find." "To find" is an infinitive and words are not to be used between those that make an infinitive.

Short, choppy sentences or the excessive use of "and," "then," or "so" should be avoided if improvement is to be made in speech.

**Arithmetic for Retailing.** A knowledge of arithmetic is valuable to the retail salesperson as well as to others engaged in retailing, such as buyers, store managers, and owners. Many people have succeeded in business who have had little formal education; but observation will show that these individuals painstakingly acquired a knowledge of mathematics at least sufficient to meet their everyday needs. It is not implied that persons engaged in retailing need have much knowledge of higher mathematics. They should, however, have an understanding of fundamental principles, and be accurate in their use. Lack of sufficient care rather than lack of knowledge is more often the

**Addition.** Undoubtedly the readers of this book will have had considerable practice in addition. Caution in placing units under units, tens under tens, hundreds under hundreds and so on is probably unnecessary. The same holds true concerning the alignment of decimal points in columns to be added.

In order to prove that a sum is correct begin at the top and add the columns downward in the same manner as they were added upward. If the two sums agree, the work is presumably correct, for by adding downward the order of the figures is inverted and, therefore, any error made in the first addition would probably be detected in the second.

**Mental Addition.** Practice mental addition with the following list, which contains all possible groups of two figures each:

1	2	3	2	4	3	5	4	3	6	5	4	7	6	5
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
4	8	7	6	5	9	8	7	6	5	9	8	7	6	9
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
8	7	6	9	8	7	9	8	7	9	8	9	8	9	9
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>

The above additions should be practiced from left to right, from right to left, from top to bottom, and from bottom to top. This is the first and most important step in grouping.

**Problems for Practice.** Several problems are given for practice in addition. Copy them on a separate sheet of paper and add. Then check your answer to the key which follows:

1.  $56 + 49 + 17 + 21 + 36 =$
2.  $42 + 46 + 43 + 58 + 91 =$
3.  $\$26.50 + \$25.70 + \$30.18 =$
4.  $\$1.04 + \$0.98 + \$0.69 + \$3.52 + \$6.09 + \$2.48 =$
5.  $\$0.23 + \$0.47 + \$9.44 + \$1.88 =$
6.  $\$20.08 + \$14.00 + \$7.06 + \$3.00 + \$0.77 =$
7.  $\$0.26 + \$4259.02 + \$30.06 + \$4.90 + \$362.21 =$
8.  $\$96.52 + \$0.98 + \$843.29 + \$456 + \$789.65 =$
9.  $\$96.52 + \$679.84 + \$563.98 + \$989.98 =$
10.  $\$49.50 + \$9.90 + \$1.19 =$

Answers: 1. 179    2. 280    3. \$8238    4. \$14.80    5. \$12.02    6. \$44.91  
 7. \$4656.45    8. \$1735.00    9. \$2330.32    10. \$60.59

It should be kept in mind that leading stores give tests in arithmetic for selling positions. Even in stores where this

is not the case, a mistake in addition can prove very embarrassing to the salesperson, and in some cases lead to serious complications. Therefore students should be sure that they can add accurately.

**Subtraction.** It can be safely assumed that those who study these pages know the method used in subtraction. Subtraction is sometimes included in tests for individuals desiring to become retail salespeople. Solve the few problems that follow before looking at the answers given after them.

1. From \$72.82 subtract \$48.15.
2. From \$640.37 subtract \$59.08.
3. From \$712.87 subtract \$400.89.
4. From \$935.00 subtract \$648.00.
5. From \$89.83 subtract \$53.62.

Answers: 1. \$24.67    2. \$581.29    3. \$311.98    4. \$287.00    5. \$36.21

**Multiplication.** Multiplication is another of the fundamental processes with which all students should be familiar. Students of retailing are no exception in this regard. This process is used by the retail salesperson as well as by buyers, store managers, and others engaged in retailing.

Solve the problems that follow and then check your answers with those which are given after the problems.

1.  $175 \times 7$
2.  $145 \times 13$
3.  $254 \times 99$
4.  $365 \times 11$
5.  $135 \times 55$
6.  $562 \times 41$
7.  $765 \times 401$
- $13 \times 19$

Answers: 1. 1225    2. 1885    3. 25,146    4. 4015    5. 7425    6. 23,042  
7. 306,765    8. 247

**Division.** This fundamental process is used in retailing and every student should be able to use it accurately.

Solve these problems and check your answers with those given:

1.  $\$7.20 \div 5$
2.  $\$105.17 \div 13$
3.  $5441 \div 26$
4.  $\$658.14 \div 6$
5.  $\$6146.48 \div 8$
6.  $\$38.70 \div 10$

Answers: 1. \$1.44    2. \$8.09    3. 209 remainder 7    4. \$109.69    5. \$768.31  
6. \$3.87

**Fractions.** Occasionally it is necessary for the retail employee to multiply by fractions, as for example:

16 $\frac{7}{8}$  yards of carpet at \$1200 per yard

Solution

$$\$12 \times 16 = \$192; \quad \$12 \times \frac{7}{8} = \$10\frac{1}{2} \text{ or } 10\frac{1}{2}$$

$$\$192 + \$10\frac{1}{2} = \$202\frac{1}{2}$$

Solve the following problem:

$$142 \times 6\frac{3}{4}$$

The correct answer is 940 $\frac{3}{4}$ .

**Addition of Decimals.** In addition of decimals place the number so that the decimal points will be directly under each other, and add the figures as in the addition of whole numbers, beginning at the extreme right. Then place a decimal point in the sum, directly under the column of decimal points.

Solve the following problem:

$$1.75 + 62.625 + 3.937$$

Solution:

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.75 \\ 62.625 \\ 3.937 \\ \hline 68.312 \end{array}$$

The greatest care must be exercised in using decimals. The decimal point is important because if misplaced a serious error will result.

**Percentage.** If any quantity is divided into 100 parts, then one of these parts represents one one-hundredth, or, as it is called, one per cent of the whole. Thus, one per cent equals one one-hundredth, also written .01. It is important that this be remembered in working problems where percentage is involved in order to point off the proper number of places.

Examples: 1. 5% of \$400 = \$20.00

2. 15% of 5250 = 787.50

In both these problems two places are pointed off because per cent means hundredths.

Problems for practice:

1. Find 10% of 550; of 15,000; of \$157; of \$600.

2. Find 125% of \$300; of 640; of 240; of 250.

3. Find 64% of 125.

6. Find 120% of 625.

4. Find 24% of 250.

7. Find 25% of 700.

5. Find 16% of 500.

8. Find 75% of 640.

### Use of Percentage in Connection with Specific Retailing Problems.

1. The selling price of an article is \$50. The mark-up is 20% on retail. What was the cost of the article?

20% of \$50 is \$10, the gross margin.  $\$50 - \$10 = \$40$ , which is the cost price of the article.

Another way to solve the same problem would be:

100% = the retail selling price.

20% = mark-up.

80% = cost.

80% of \$50 is \$40, the cost price.

2. An article costs \$12. It is decided to mark it up 40% on retail. What will the price tag show?

Again:

100% = the retail selling price.

40% = mark-up.

60% = cost.

60% = \$12.

1% =  $1/60$  of \$12 or  $\$12/60$ .

100% =  $100 \times \$12/60$  or \$20.

Proof:

\$20 = retail marked price.

\$12 = cost.

\$ 8 = gross margin.

What per cent of \$20 is \$8?

$\$8 \div \$20 = 8/20$  or  $4/10$  or 40%.

**Arithmetic Test.** Material has been included in this chapter to aid the student in reviewing in arithmetic. One learns by the actual working of problems rather than by having the need for proficiency brought to one's attention. Now, as a summary, a simple test is included. Though some of these problems may have seemed elementary, it has been found that drill in the topics included is often needed.

Add:	1.	1.03	2.	.24
		.99		.48
		.68		9.43
		3 52		<u>1.85</u>
		6 09		
		2.48		
		.94		
		<u>5.74</u>		
Subtract:	3.	4.64	4.	10.98
		<u>1 38</u>		<u>2.36</u>

Multiply:	5. 42.24	6. 17.51
	.52	.44

Percentage:	7. 20% of \$26.50.	8. 10% of \$14.95.
	9. 20% of \$9.85.	10. 10% of \$9650.

Decimals:	11. 16 yards of carpet at	\$ .95 =
	12. 18 yards of chintz at	\$ .85 =
	13. 6½ yards of silk at	\$ 2.85 =
	14. 3¾ yards of carpet at	\$12.75 =
	15. 4¾ yards of tape at	\$ .15 =
	16. 5/12 doz. of dishes at	\$ 7.50 =

## Answers:

1. 21.47	9. \$1.97
2. 12.00	10. \$965.
3. 3.26	11. \$15.20
4. 8.62	12. \$15.30
5. 21.9648	13. \$19.24
6. 7.7044	14. \$46.22
7. \$5.30	15. .71
8. \$1.50	16. 3.13

**Discounts.** Taking discounts when possible is important in retailing, as net profits are often comparatively small.

The terms on bills are often expressed as 2/10 net/30, which means that if the bill is paid within 10 days two per cent discount will be given. Otherwise, it is to be paid within 30 days with no discount.

Figuring discounts is not difficult. *Example:* A bill is for \$60 with terms of 2/10 net/30. What will be the amount of payment necessary if made within 10 days?

2% of \$60 is \$1.20.

\$60 — \$1.20 = \$58.80 net amount to be paid.

**Rate of Stock-Turn.** The rate of stock-turn, or turnover, is the number of times the average stock is sold within a given period, usually a year.

To figure the rate of stock-turn, divide the total sales for the period by the retail value of the average amount of stock. If the inventory is kept at cost, divide the total cost of sales by the average inventory at cost.

For example, let us consider the retail store whose net sales for the period of a year are \$48,000. If the average inventory were

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Add:	1. 1.03	2. .24
	.99	.48
	.68	9.43
	3 52	<u>1.85</u>
	6.09	
	2.48	
	.94	
	<u>5.74</u>	
Subtract:	3. 4.64	4. 10.98
	<u>1.38</u>	<u>2.36</u>

Multiply:	5. 42.24	6. 17.51
	<u>.52</u>	<u>.44</u>
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4. 8.62	12. \$15.30
5. 21.9648	13. \$19.24
6. 7.7044	14. \$46.22
7. \$5.30	15. .71
8. \$1.50	16. 3.13

**Discounts.** Taking discounts when possible is important in retailing, as net profits are often comparatively small.

The terms on bills are often expressed as 2/10 net/30, which means that if the bill is paid within 10 days two per cent discount will be given. Otherwise, it is to be paid within 30 days with no discount.

Figuring discounts is not difficult. *Example:* A bill is for \$60 with terms of 2/10 net/30. What will be the amount of payment necessary if made within 10 days?

2% of \$60 is \$1.20.

\$60 — \$1.20 = \$58.80 net amount to be paid.

**Rate of Stock-Turn.** The rate of stock-turn, or turnover, is the number of times the average stock is sold within a given period, usually a year.

To figure the rate of stock-turn, divide the total sales for the period by the retail value of the average amount of stock. If the inventory is kept at cost, divide the total cost of sales by the average inventory at cost.

For example, let us consider the retail store whose net sales for the period of a year are \$48,000. If the average inventory were



\$4,000 at selling prices, the rate of stock-turn would be computed as follows:

$$\frac{\$48,000}{\$4,000} = 12, \text{ the rate of stock-turn.}$$

The chief value in knowing the rate of stock-turn is in being able to compare it with that of other stores handling similar merchandise. Though conditions vary, the rate of stock-turn is one measure of the business. If it is unfavorable, steps should be taken to improve it; if it is good, efforts should be made to keep it so, or, if possible, make it better.

Certain trade publications and associations publish figures on rates of stock-turn for the kinds of retail stores in which they are interested. The National Cash Register Company has published booklets which contain among other figures the rates of stock-turn for various lines of merchandise.

The table on page 143 taken from one of their publications<sup>1</sup> will serve as an example of available figures on rates of stock-turn.

**Increasing the Average Sale.** This will be dealt with more fully in the chapter which deals with suggestion selling. The arithmetical proof of the importance of suggestion selling, however, will be discussed here.

The importance of increasing the average sale is illustrated by the example which follows:

Suppose that a store has 80,000 transactions (sales) and total sales of \$56,500 in a given period. In that case the average sale is about 70 cents. The figures are:<sup>2</sup>

Sales.....		\$56,500
Cost of goods (75% of sales).....	\$42,375	
Salaries.....	4,680	
Operating expenses.....	6,620	53,675
Net profit.....		\$ 2,825

If the sales were increased on the average five cents, the total would be \$4,000 more (80,000 x \$.05). The results would then be somewhat as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Merchants Service, The National Cash Register Company, *Better Retailing* (9th ed.; Dayton, Ohio: The National Cash Register Company), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

**Stock-Turn in Retail Businesses**  
**Average Number of Turns Per Year**

Kind of Business	Stock-turns per Year
Auto Tires and Accessories .....	5.7
Books.....	3.0
Builders' Supplies.....	3.1
China.....	2.5
Clothing (Men's).....	2.2
Department Stores—Sales under \$150,000.....	2.0
Department Stores—Sales \$150,000—\$300,000.....	2.5
Department Stores—Sales \$300,000—\$500,000.....	3.1
Department Stores—Sales \$500,000—\$750,000.....	3.6
Department Stores—Sales \$750,000—\$1,000,000.....	3.5
Department Stores—Sales \$1,000,000—\$2,000,000.....	3.65
Department Stores—Sales \$2,000,000—\$4,000,000.....	4.2
Department Stores—Sales \$4,000,000—\$10,000,000.....	4.4
Department Stores—Sales \$10,000,000—\$20,000,000.....	4.3
Department Stores—Sales over \$20,000,000.....	5.4
Drugs (Chain).....	13.7
Drugs (Independent).....	2.7
Dry Goods.....	3.0
Electrical Goods.....	4.47
Furniture.....	2.0
General Merchandise.....	4.5
Groceries (Chain)—	
Sales less than \$50,000.....	9.2
Sales \$50,000 to \$100,000.....	9.9
Groceries (Independent)—	
Cash and Carry.....	12.1
Food Markets.....	13.0
Service.....	9.0
Haberdashery.....	2.1
Hats (Men's and Boys').....	2.2
Hardware.....	1.52
Jewelry.....	0.9
Leather Goods.....	3.0
Meat Markets.....	57.4
Paint.....	4.0
Shoes.....	1.8
Specialty Stores—Sales under \$500,000.....	3.9
Specialty Stores—Sales \$500,000—\$2,000,000.....	6.2
Specialty Stores—Sales over \$2,000,000.....	6.5
Stationery.....	2.7
Tobacco (Chain).....	50.0
Tobacco (Independent).....	5.0

Sales .....		\$60,500
Cost of goods (75% of sales).....	\$45,375	
Salaries ... . . . .	4,680	
Operating expenses <sup>1</sup> ... . . . .	<u>6,620</u>	<u>56,675</u>
Net profit .....		\$ 3,825

In this example by increasing the average sales five cents the net profits are increased \$1,000. Does more need to be said as to the importance of suggestion selling? (See chapter on "Suggestion Selling.")

### WORD STUDY

healthful	discount
inconspicuous	turnover
ingenious	proficiency

<sup>1</sup> Actually operating expenses would be increased somewhat, but not enough to reduce materially the effectiveness of the average increase in sales

## CHAPTER X

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### MAKING THE APPROACH

In beginning this chapter it is considered advisable to call the attention of the student to topics discussed in other chapters of this text which relate directly or indirectly to the act of making the sale.

**The Effect of Environment upon the Sale.** The favorable or unfavorable effect of the appearance of the store upon the customer is discussed in Chapter IV, "The Appearance of the Store." The student should review this chapter in connection with the beginning steps in making the sale. The opportunity and responsibility of the salesperson in regard to environment will vary, depending upon the store in which she is employed. It cannot be overemphasized, however, since individuals are so greatly influenced in their shopping by attending conditions that everything possible should be done to make the surroundings pleasant.

**Qualities of the Salesperson Affect the Approach.** The qualities discussed in Chapter II, "Desirable Qualities of the Retail Salesperson," have a relation to all phases of the sale. Characteristics of prime importance are a pleasing appearance, pleasing quality of voice, correct speech, good manners, a businesslike attitude, tact, and patience.

Alertness, promptness, and attentiveness were only briefly discussed in Chapter II. Because of their importance in the early stages of the sale, their application will now be considered individually.

**Alertness, Promptness, and Attentiveness.** The efficient salesperson is always alert and constantly on the lookout for customers. Being alert on the job makes it possible to notice the customer before actually making the approach.

In every store and in all departments there are miscellaneous duties which salespeople are expected to perform, such as keeping stock, making displays, taking inventories, making want slips, etc. Regardless of these tasks, the alert salesperson keeps service uppermost in mind. The customer is seen as she enters the store or de-

partment and the salesperson immediately centers her attention on her to the exclusion of other things.

One of the most common causes of inattention is the habit of visiting among salespeople. Discussing personal matters or gossiping is unbusinesslike and makes an unfavorable impression. To continue in conversation after customers have appeared is most discourteous, and invariably acts as a barrier to a good sales beginning. Such rudeness is rightfully resented, and a continuance of the habit will result in lowered sales volume for the salesperson and a loss of good will for the store.

Promptness in making the approach results directly from constant alertness. In other words, promptness in making the approach follows alertness in watching the customers and readiness to be of service. Each salesperson is responsible for a certain area in the store, and the service given customers within this area.

The following are illustrations of the lack of alertness and attentiveness: A customer was attracted by a blue voile dress in the window of a dress shop. She entered the shop to ask about the dress. One salesgirl was behind the cash desk adding up sales and another was arranging dresses on a rack. A third girl was waiting on a customer. As the customer came into the store neither the girl who was behind the desk nor the one doing stock work looked up from her task. The customer waited at the counter and finally walked to the desk and asked to see dresses like the one in the window. The salesgirl merely looked up and said, "We can't take that dress out of the window. The window trimmer won't be back today." (The customer had not even asked to have the dress removed.) No offer was made to show dresses and the customer assumed there were no dresses in stock like the one in the window. She walked over to a rack where dresses were displayed and found there several dresses like the one displayed in the window. However, no one approached to show them so the customer walked out of the store.

In the above situation there is evidence of conspicuous lack of alertness and attentiveness. The salesgirl was not alert to the entrance of the customer into the store. Poor attention was given to the first statements made by the customer, as shown by the salesperson's remarks—which were not an answer to the customer's request.

Alertness to the first questions asked or statements made by a customer brings about much more effective handling of a sale. It is essential for the salesperson to learn as quickly as possible what it is that the customer desires, or what her shopping problem is, and give immediate and intelligent attention to the matter.

The following example shows a lack of alertness that is inexcusable. A customer entered a household utilities section and was interested in looking at oilcloth shelving. She looked over the display on a table for a considerable length of time. Two salesgirls stood a few feet away talking. The floor man noticed the customer and asked her if she wished to be waited on. The answer was "Yes, please. I have been waiting for some time." He then called one of the girls who had been too absorbed in conversation to notice the waiting customer.

**The Salesperson's Attitude.** In general, there are two distinct attitudes which may be observed among salespeople—positive and negative.

*Positive Attitude.* The positive attitude usually will be found among those who have a wholesome regard for their work, the merchandise they sell, and the people with whom they must deal each day. This type of person will approach the customer with a welcoming smile. She will show enthusiasm over her merchandise and a genuine interest in helping the customer. The customer will be able to feel at once that the salesperson is not only willing to be of service but is both eager and ready to do so. Such an attitude is an asset and a secret of real success in selling.

*Negative Attitude.* In contrast to a positive attitude, one which may be termed negative is sometimes found. A customer cannot be expected to manifest interest in buying when the salesperson seems to be annoyed at being asked to show merchandise. An attitude of boredom and indifference is certainly detrimental to success. The example which follows illustrates such an attitude.

A customer was looking for a comb, brush, and mirror set. She approached the counter and looked at the sets inside the showcase. The customer waited and finally made her presence known to the salesperson.

*Customer:* I would like to be waited on, please.

*Salesperson,* impatiently: What is it?

*Customer:* I am looking for a gift, and I think I should like a comb and brush set.

*Salesperson:* What price?

*Customer:* I don't know. May I see a few?

(Salesperson points to two sets inside the case.)

*Salesperson:* That set is priced at \$4.95. The other one is \$6.00.

(Customer looks at them through the glass.)

*Salesperson:* They are both very nice.

*Customer:* What is the difference in these sets?

*Salesperson:* There isn't much difference. The mirror is a little better in the \$6.00 set.

*Customer:* That seems quite a difference in price for that feature alone. Perhaps I had better look around some more.

(The customer walks away.)

In this instance the salesperson lost a sale, the customer did not get a needed article, and probably the store lost a customer.

A customer becomes conscious of the salesperson's attitude, not so much by what she may say as by what she does or fails to do. There is really nothing more exasperating, for example, than to have a salesperson gaze about the room, or at other salespeople, while the customer is looking at the merchandise. This is most discourteous regardless of the circumstances. The customer, as guest of the store, merits unstinted and undivided attention.

The order-taker type of salesperson does not attract customers. Real salesmanship is not merely a mechanical handing-merchandise-over-the counter process. Halfhearted attempts at selling displease customers, regardless of how small the purchase may be. The desire on the part of the store to have the customer return should be kept in mind.

**The Salesperson's Expression.** The facial expression also plainly reveals interest or the lack of it on the part of the salesperson. The customer is either attracted or repelled by the expression on the salesperson's face.

**Studying the Customer.** It may be well to explain that in this chapter an endeavor will be made to show how observing or studying the customer may influence the selling procedure from the beginning of the sale to its close. It will be necessary to consider the following three questions:

1. *When should the salesperson begin to study the customer?* If the salesperson has an opportunity to observe the customer before approaching her, she may be able to notice certain points which will guide her in dealing with this particular person. This can be done to best advantage in a department where customers are moving about looking at merchandise displayed on the open floor. In such a setting the salesperson has an opportunity to observe the customer before she becomes aware of the salesperson. Under these conditions the salesperson will form an opinion as to how to make the most effective approach, whether this person will respond more readily to a friendly approach, a businesslike approach, or a quiet, unobtrusive approach. Discernment as to the best way to approach different people will soon be developed.

In busy departments, or at counters where customers may be waiting, it is not always possible to observe the customer closely before approaching her. It is possible, however, for salespeople to train themselves to study a customer at the very beginning of the interview, and do this in an inconspicuous manner. The salesperson will observe the customer's general characteristics before or during the time the merchandise is being shown. This process will continue from the moment of approach to the conclusion of the sales interview.

2. *What factors should be observed as the salesperson studies the customer?* The customer's appearance and her manner of dress may indicate her taste. Observation of these factors may be helpful in departments such as ready-to-wear. For example, a customer may show by her manner of dress whether she is likely to be interested in selecting ultrafashionable or conservative clothes. The salesperson will select a much different type of garment to be shown the plain, conservative type of woman than that to be shown a customer whose appearance suggests fanciful taste or extreme mode.

When studying the customer's appearance the salesperson should avoid using this factor as a basis for judging her buying power. The way a person is dressed is not always an indication of how much she wishes to buy or the price she will pay. For example, a woman wearing a mink coat will not always desire the most expensive or the finest quality items in stock. Likewise, some of the most extravagant purchases are made by shabbily dressed customers.

Although appearance is one of the factors by which one individ-



ual appraises another, either consciously or unconsciously, training directors stress the fact that the salesperson must never allow this factor to influence her manner toward a customer. With every customer, regardless of appearance, it is expected that the salesperson be courteous, interested, and willing. Appearance should never be the index in determining what priced merchandise to show.

The customer's comments and questions should be listened to attentively. This will reveal her shopping problem. Her remarks should be analyzed for their indication of what type of merchandise is most likely to please her. Her decision or indecision may also be shown by what she says.

The customer's manner will doubtless indicate whether she is a leisurely shopper or one who is impatient to be served. It may also indicate whether she is reserved and dignified or friendly and sociable. A customer who is straightforward and businesslike will respond to selling technique that is quick and efficient. Such factors are worth observing if one desires a favorable reaction in each case. For example, a business man enters a lingerie department to purchase a gift for his wife. The salesperson who is understanding will approach him quickly and show by her attitude that she is ready to serve him immediately. Her manner is pleasant but businesslike as she shows various attractive articles and, perhaps, makes suggestions. In this situation action is demanded and time must not be wasted by unnecessary questions or needless discussion.

Other factors may be of value in studying the customer. Among these, facial expression is often mentioned as having singular value as an index of mood and receptiveness.

It should be borne in mind that conclusions concerning the customer should result from observance of a number of factors rather than one.

3. *How does studying the customer help the salesperson?* It enables the salesperson to better understand her customers. It provides an opportunity to observe those characteristics which may have an influence upon the type of merchandise desired, the service expected, and buying habits in general. The salesperson may be able to "catch" the mood of the customer. Because of these observations she may better appeal to her interests and serve her in the manner most appreciated.

Studying the customer aids the salesperson in directing her sales efforts. Through observation she can better adapt herself to the individual with whom she is dealing and more wisely apply her selling methods, stressing those specific points regarding the merchandise that are likely to make the strongest appeal.

The merchandise to be shown the customer is more carefully selected when the salesperson has made definite observations. Efficient procedure avoids confusion and waste, speeds sales, and saves time for both the salesperson and the customer. To accomplish these objectives endeavor is made to show the type of merchandise which seems best suited to the individual.

The following example illustrates the advantage to the salesperson of studying the customer. A man, let us say, who is the acme of neatness pauses at a counter where shirts are displayed. He deliberately adjusts his glasses and begins to examine such details as the style of the collar, the cuffs, and the quality of the buttons. He also rubs the material between his fingers to determine its quality. A saleswoman has observed his appearance and manner. She decides the approach must be prompt and direct. It would be unwise to say "That is an excellent shirt, isn't it?" Instead, she begins by giving specific information. "This shirt is made of fine quality broadcloth. The collar has a permanent starchless finish and the material is guaranteed fade-proof." The Sanforized-shrunk label on the shirt is also pointed out to the customer. This customer is likely to respond favorably since the approach is adapted to his personality.

It is deemed advisable to caution beginning salespeople against too hasty decision in judging customers or attempt to catalogue them. Moods are variable. A person may be in one mood one day and, perhaps, the next day be in an entirely different mood. Many factors influence one's mood and attitude and, realizing this, salespeople must show patience and courtesy at all times.

In this discussion on studying the customer, endeavor has been made to point out, in a general way, the possibilities for studying customers, and the advantages which may be derived from that study. It is clearly to be understood that much will depend upon the type of merchandise which one sells and the conditions under which the selling takes place. There will naturally be little opportunity for the grocery clerk or the notions salesgirl to study cus-

tomers. The very nature of the merchandise more or less eliminates the need for such analysis. The situation is different, however, when one is trying to sell goods such as wearing apparel or household furnishings, which require deliberation and concern on the part of the customer and considerable sales effort on the part of the salesperson.

Certain types of merchandise are more difficult to sell than others, and often the sales situation requires all the discretion, initiative, and ingenuity which the salesperson possesses. It is obvious that in this kind of selling, studying the customer and adapting the selling methods to meet the requirements are methods likely to afford distinct advantage.

**The Approach.** There can be no definite rule established as to the proper manner of approach. The approach necessarily depends upon existing conditions and circumstance. The kind of store, and the merchandise being offered have considerable influence upon the way an approach is made. The same is true in regard to different departments of a large store. For example, salespeople in a grocery department may make a much different approach from those selling ready-to-wear or furniture. Also there is a variation in the approach used by those selling behind a busy counter and that of salespeople who sell on the open floor.

**The Merchandise Approach.** Selling in a department where merchandise is displayed on the open floor requires initiative on the part of the salesperson. In this type of department many customers may appear to be "just looking" and really may have no intention of buying. If allowed to browse around at ease, the so-called "looker" may find something of interest or, perhaps, some article of which she is in need. This type of customer may be approached when it appears that she has become interested sufficiently in the item. The salesperson should give information at once on the desirability of the merchandise. A positive statement of information should be made rather than a general meaningless remark. A customer, let us say, seems interested in a pair of pottery bookends. The salesperson has noticed the customer's interest and advances to the counter. In a pleasant tone of voice she says, "Those bookends are Rookwood pottery, which you perhaps know is one of the finest made in America." Such an approach is called the merchandise approach and is considered superior to other forms. In the example given it conveyed

information which further increased interest and desire and was therefore more effective than if the salesperson had merely said, "Those are lovely bookends, aren't they?"

**Another Good Approach.** In those instances where the customer is not looking at specific merchandise it is effective to use a pleasant "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon" in speaking to her. This approach may be effectively combined with the one discussed above. Keeping in mind that the customer is the guest of the store, it seems logical that she should be pleasantly greeted with "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon." The customer referred to in connection with the merchandise approach might have been approached in this manner: "Good Morning." (Slight pause.) "Those bookends are Rookwood pottery, which you perhaps know is one of the finest made in America." This makes her feel welcome and also stimulates her interest in the merchandise.

**Other Forms of Approach.** Phrases such as "May I help you?" or "May I assist you?" are sometimes heard. The main objection, to these phrases for general use, however, is that they too often lead to a negative answer, such as "No, thank you" or "No, I am just looking." The wise salesperson will avoid asking any question which will give the customer an opportunity to say "just looking." There is usually some motive in idle browsing, and if an approach is made that will not only intensify interest but also create desire, a sale is more likely to follow.

It is to be assumed that when a customer has paused long enough to examine an article of merchandise there is interest; consequently, an opening is provided for an approach. It is unwise to ask such questions as, "Do you wish attention?" or "Do you want to be waited on?" since it induces a negative response. This is always a poor approach.

When customers are waiting to be served in a busy store or department the approach may, of course, be varied to fit the situation. It should also be mentioned here that statements used in the approach should never become mechanical. Rather, it should be personalized and convey sincerity.

**Calling the Customer by Name.** It is considered good salesmanship for a salesperson to learn the customer's name whenever possible. Associate the name with the purchase after the sale is com-

pleted so that when the customer returns the salesperson may address her by name, as, "Good Morning, Mrs. Brown." It pleases a customer to know that she has been remembered, and, when previous purchases are recalled, she is convinced of genuine interest on the part of the salesperson.

#### WORD STUDY

elements  
repetition  
environment

significant  
observation  
indication

## CHAPTER XI

### PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED IN SHOWING MERCHANDISE

#### **The Effect of Consumer Education upon Showing Merchandise.**

As consumers become better informed salespeople will need to improve their selling technique. Training departments of progressive stores are recognizing this and are giving special instruction in regard to merchandise training. In the meantime those who aspire to become efficient salespeople will have to prepare themselves in accordance with present trends.

The idea that the interests of the store and the customer are so divergent that information which is good for one is not necessarily good for the other is outmoded. There is plenty of evidence in support of this contention. The recent interest in store publications which are prepared to give merchandise information to consumers serve as a good example.

Although publicity in connection with the consumer movement may diminish, steady progress in the direction of consumer education will continue as a basis for sound merchandising.

What does this mean to the salesperson? It means more facts, based upon intelligent study of lines of merchandise, are to be ascertained and utilized. Here, as in similar situations, the opportunity to serve brings with it responsibility.

Some points discussed in this chapter have been recognized as being important for a long time. They will remain so even though factual information concerning goods is taking a more important place. For example, handling goods with appreciation has long been recognized as being effective in presenting merchandise to the customer. Likewise showing the goods as nearly as possible in the way the customer will use them is another important principle. Emphasis upon demonstration will continue, together with provision of abundant merchandise information.

**Be Well Informed on the Merchandise.** The salesperson selling

furniture must know the construction of the article, its durability, and its general features. A customer buying a davenport will be as much concerned about the inner construction as the outside appearance. Likewise, the mattress salesperson will be expected to answer promptly and correctly questions as to the number of coils used, the kind of springs, the type of materials used for filling and the wearing quality of the outer covering.

Salespeople who deal with electrical appliances or mechanical devices, for example, must have or develop a technical knowledge and be able to explain fully how the product is to be used. Demonstration of such merchandise in actual use is very often necessary.

In order to add to her fund of knowledge, and consequently facilitate selling, the salesperson should also be well informed on the following general questions:

1. In what colors, sizes, styles, and prices does the merchandise come?
2. Is the reserve stock kept in the department or on some other floor?
3. If reserve stock is in a stockroom, where is the stockroom located?
4. How may the salespeople obtain merchandise from the stockroom?
5. What is the best way to display the goods when showing it to customers?
6. What are the selling points to emphasize?

The ambitious salesperson will strive to familiarize herself with all important facts concerning her wares. She will be well informed on any of the questions mentioned above pertaining to stocks. Not content with general knowledge of the merchandise she will constantly endeavor to look for points of special interest about each article of merchandise and, in this way, her work becomes a profession rather than a routine job.

Proper training for selling will result in greater profits to the store owner and increased income for salespeople.

**Use Merchandise Knowledge Intelligently.** Merchandise knowledge is going to play a vastly more important part with the continuance of consumer education. The customer will know what to look for as she contemplates a purchase. She will be able to judge the

quality more accurately. Even then, she is likely to ask questions which will not be easy to answer unless they have been anticipated. The more that customers know about merchandise in general, the more likely they are to seek to learn the finer, less apparent, details.

In Chapters V, VI, VII, and VIII merchandise features were discussed and sources of information indicated. Knowledge is of value, however, only when it is properly used. The competent salesperson does not tire the customer by burdening her with too many details concerning the goods being considered. She is exceedingly careful not to give the impression of flaunting her superior knowledge. The tactful salesperson acts as if she believes the customer is already familiar with the merchandise. This is a subtle and yet altogether fair way of pleasing her. She does, however, confidently proceed to give wanted information.

This can be illustrated, perhaps, by consideration of the work of a teacher. How would you like to have an instructor who knew only the bare fundamentals of the subject she was teaching? How much would you be aided in your learning by such an individual? The capable teacher has a background of accumulated knowledge which she adapts to her pupils' needs in such a way as not to become tiresome. Selling is in a large measure a process of instruction.

Salespeople should obtain descriptive material from the manufacturers of the products which they sell, if this is possible. Many companies have well-prepared sales manuals and booklets which apply principles of salesmanship to their specific products. In a book such as this, it is considered advisable to deal only with general principles. In supplementary material secured that deals with specific products, it will be interesting to see how many of the selling procedures advocated show relationship to those more general which you are now learning.

It is assumed that you have acquired the attitude that merchandise knowledge is essential and that perhaps you have made a study of a particular line of merchandise. In this sale example there is evidence of the salesperson's knowledge of the merchandise, its location, range of colors and sizes, as well as definite selling points.

(Salesperson advances to meet the customer who has paused to look at a display of table scarfs.)

*Salesperson:* Good morning. (*Smiles cordially.*) These table



scarfs are imported and are exquisite pieces of Chinese embroidery.

*Customer:* I am looking for a scarf large enough to use on a grand piano. These are too small.

*Salesperson:* We have a number of choice ones put away in the drawer, and they are large. I will show them to you.

(Salesperson selects a scarf that is pale rather than vivid in tone.)

*Customer:* The design on the scarf is very attractive, but I need something more vivid in color since the piano is in a dark corner of the room.

(Salesperson listens to this comment and looks for a brighter scarf.)

*Salesperson:* Here is one with a green background which is brighter in color.

*Customer:* There is too much green in the room already. I prefer some other color.

*Salesperson:* There is a beautiful scarf in one of our window displays which I am sure would please you. It is a lovely shade of Chinese red and would make a perfect showing on the dark wood of the grand piano. I shall be glad to send down to the window for it.

(The scarf is brought to the salesperson who shows it to the waiting customer.)

*Customer:* It is beautiful and will be just perfect in my room. I am so pleased you found it for me. How much is it?

*Salesperson:* The price is \$6.00. It is really one of our finest pieces of Chinese embroidery. That is why it was chosen for the window display.

*Customer:* I will take it with me, please.

*Salesperson:* (Gives customer the package.) Thank you.

The following example also shows the salesperson's knowledge of the merchandise.

(Salesperson approaches the customer at the blouse counter. The customer has been looking at a particular blouse on the counter.)

*Salesperson:* The blouse you have been looking at is one of our newest fall styles.

*Customer:* Yes, I like the style very much.

*Salesperson:* You have probably observed that the blouse is unusually well tailored. The workmanship is excellent.

*Customer:* Will this material wrinkle easily?

*Salesperson:* The material is heavy crepe and is all silk. It will not wrinkle easily.

*Customer:* I would prefer this blouse in green rather than in brown. Do you have it in green?

*Salesperson:* Yes, we have the blouse in olive green, one of the leading fall colors. It is really more attractive in green than in brown.

*Customer:* Do you think this shade of green will look well on me?

*Salesperson:* The color is quite becoming. It will also look well with the accessories you are wearing.

*Customer:* What is the price?

*Salesperson:* The price is only four dollars and ninety-five cents. It is really very reasonable for such material and workmanship.

*Customer:* I think I shall take it. Will you send it, please?

*Salesperson:* I am sure you will be pleased. Thank you.

This type of salesperson is really an asset to the store employing her. She knew her merchandise and was able to relate positive selling points. The customer was given the kind of service which would make her wish to return to the store and, probably, to the same salesperson.

**Show Enthusiasm.** One of the main reasons why a complete merchandise knowledge is essential is that it creates enthusiasm. It is human nature to be enthusiastic over the things we know the most about, and anyone enjoys talking about the things with which he is most familiar. Enthusiasm should be based upon the real merits of the article. It should not be gushing and exaggerated, but rather should be dignified and reflect sincerity. Such an attitude makes a favorable impression on the customer and becomes a real asset in selling. It has a direct effect upon one's earning power, since one's earnings often depend upon the amount of merchandise one sells.

Confidence, another important aid in selling, is established when the salesperson really knows the merchandise. It is impossible to sell anything unless the salesperson is sure of her knowledge and confident of her ability to sell. Many sales are lost when the salesperson is unable to give information or is uncertain as to facts concerning the article she attempts to sell. In order to inspire confidence

in the customer's mind, positive, accurate statements must be given promptly. Never leave a doubt in the customer's mind. To do so causes her to lose confidence in the salesperson and in the store.

A study of the following sale will reveal the sincere enthusiasm which the salesperson has for the merchandise she is selling. The sale is handled in a way to inspire confidence in the mind of the customer.

The salesperson approaches a customer who has been looking about in a gift shop. The salesperson has observed that the customer has looked at various articles displayed, but, as yet, has not shown special interest in any particular object. It is evident that she is quite undecided.

*Salesperson:* Good morning. (*Smiles.*)

*Customer:* I am looking for a wedding gift, and really have no idea what I want.

*Salesperson:* We have such a nice collection of beautiful things that I am sure I can help you find just the right gift.

*Customer:* These people will receive many beautiful gifts and it is hard to think of something that is unusual and at the same time different.

(Salesperson has listened to these comments and leads the way over to a table where a large assortment of metal trays is on display.)

*Salesperson:* These trays are an entirely new line of merchandise which we consider quite unusual because of the excellent finish and fine workmanship. They have been on the market only a short time.

*Customer:* What kind of metal is it?

*Salesperson:* The metal is aluminum, but you see it has been given a fine satin finish. The workmanship on the handles and the design in the center has been done entirely by hand, which is, of course, unusual.

*Customer:* The finish is beautiful. Will the metal tarnish?

*Salesperson:* No, this metal does not tarnish or stain. It is really more practical than silver.

*Customer:* I wonder if it will fit in with their furnishings.

*Salesperson:* Do you know what kind of furniture is being used in the house?

*Customer:* I know the bride is fond of Early American furniture and plans to use it in her home.

*Salesperson:* That is splendid. One of these trays will be most appropriate since they are hand-wrought metal, as were metal objects in Colonial days. I feel sure you could not choose a gift which would be better adapted.

*Customer:* (Looking at price tag.) I believe the tray will be fine, and it is near the price I had wished to pay. Will you please have it wrapped as a gift?

*Salesperson:* I am sure your friends will be pleased. Thank you.

**Handle the Merchandise with Appreciation.** Another important factor to consider in our study of effective presentation of merchandise is the manner in which the articles or objects being displayed should be handled. It is essential that the salesperson handle any piece of merchandise with appreciation of its value, for in this way the customer may become impressed with the desirability of the article in question. This appreciation which one has for the merchandise is usually the result of a natural interest in certain types of wares or has been acquired after intensive study of a particular line. The ideal salesperson is one who thinks of her work as an opportunity to present new and beautiful things to those who may be seeking them and finds joy and satisfaction therein.

Merchandise should be displayed to the customer in whatever manner seems best adapted to the particular object. Any article which is delicate or fragile should be shown in such a way as to bring out all its delicate beauty. For example, a rare bit of jewelry or a fragile piece of bric-a-brac requires a real appreciation of its value in order to exhibit it properly. In presenting the piece of jewelry it should be carefully taken out of the case, then placed on the pad provided for that purpose. The actions of the salesperson, while holding the object in the proper light should give evidence of her personal admiration for its great beauty. This feeling is reflected in her "precious" handling of the piece as well as in her evident enjoyment in it. Either is valuable in causing the customer to also appreciate it to the extent that she decides to buy.

Expensive goods should never be handled in a haphazard or a careless manner. To do so only lessens the value, and even the most convincing sales talk will not impress the customer nearly so much as the appreciation which the salesperson manifests.

When displaying dresses, suits, and coats the salesperson should

avoid carrying a number of garments carelessly across the arm as they are being brought back and forth from the stockroom. Care should be taken to keep the dresses from falling from the hangers or from touching the floor. They should never be thrown over the backs of chairs after they have been displayed. Handling them carelessly tends to decrease their value in the mind of the customer, since it reflects a lack of respect and appreciation for the merchandise.

The following incident illustrates:<sup>5</sup> A customer purchased an evening dress and paid a considerable price for it. She was immensely pleased with the dress and happily anticipated wearing it. As alterations were required, the dress was left at the store. When the customer returned to the store to call for the dress, she experienced an unpleasant reaction. As the salesperson brought out the dress the customer noticed that it was carelessly tossed over one arm, the hem and sash dragging on the floor. She threw the dress over the back of a chair near where the customer was waiting. The customer was indignant over the manner in which this expensive garment was handled. Though she purchased it, she had the feeling that she had paid more than the dress was worth after witnessing such indifference and lack of regard on the part of the salesperson.

Examples of how appreciation is shown for the merchandise may be found among salespeople of almost every line of goods. Most merchandise may be well displayed if the salesperson has acquired a sufficient amount of respect for the things she sells.

The following illustrations show right and wrong ways to present merchandise: A customer, let us say, asks to see some fine linen handkerchiefs. The salesperson waiting on her pulls the handkerchiefs out of a drawer and throws them on the counter in a heap. At a little distance away another salesperson, in showing dainty handkerchiefs, lays them on a sheet of tissue to protect them from the dust, then gently picks one up and unfolds it to fully exhibit the beauty and fineness of the material and handwork to her customer. The contrast is evident.

A salesperson was asked to show a set of bath towels. She took the towels from the shelf and held one toward the customer without offering to unfold it. The customer inquired the name of the brand. The salesperson answered, "These towels are the Blank brand."

She unfolded a small portion of the bath towel—barely enough to show the design. Another salesperson in showing the same towels took a matched set carefully from the shelf. She unfolded each one lengthwise over the edge of the counter, thus giving each towel the appearance of being on a rack. The salesperson remarked, "These towels are the finest Blank quality." The salesperson handed the towel to the customer and said, "You will notice they are thick in texture, yet soft to the touch. This new variegated stripe is one of our most attractive patterns." She then turned the display lamp at the right angle to show up the lovely design and colors. Showing the matched set of towels would naturally stimulate desire to buy the entire ensemble.

**Make Use of Buying Motives.** In Chapter III important buying motives were discussed. The salesperson should have them well in mind and make use of them in showing merchandise. Motives for buying goods can be appealed to, thus intensifying the desire to obtain them. This is good sales strategy and is justifiable provided appeal is made to the proper motive.

Strengthen your selling by knowing and making use of buying motives. Review Chapter III in connection with showing goods.

Treating customers understandingly who seem nervous, deliberate, irritable, or suspicious will take time, but the effort is worth while. Learn the background information well and strengthen it by careful observation and practice.

**Arouse the Customer's Interest and Imagination.** There are two important factors in this process which are as follows:

1. *See the merchandise as the customer will use it.* The salesperson must see the merchandise in the setting in which it will be used. For example, the rug salesman will visualize the room as it will appear with the addition of the new rug. Likewise, the salesperson who is selling a dress for a special occasion must see that dress as the customer will wear it. The salesperson will cause her to anticipate the pleasure she will receive from the admiration of her friends and the feeling of satisfaction which comes from being well dressed. In this way the customer's imagination is stimulated, and she becomes eager to buy the dress.

2. *Get on the same side of the counter with the customer.* There are many things which we all should like to have for our own, which

we are unable to buy. Any person working in a store finds something each day which tempts this natural desire for possession. Though we know we cannot satisfy our desire for all of the things which appeal to us, we can learn to enjoy selling them to others whose desires and tastes are similar to our own. This attitude helps the salesperson to feel a genuine and personal interest in selling the most suitable and appropriate article to each customer. Selling the right merchandise requires a strong personal interest in both the merchandise and the customer.

A bride came into a store to buy a selection of cooking utensils for her kitchen. A group of pans in blue enamelware attracted her strongly. The salesperson inquired about the color scheme in the kitchen, which was green and white. In visualizing the blue pans in a green and white kitchen it was obvious that the bride would be disappointed with the effect which, of course, would be unattractive because of the lack of color harmony. The salesperson immediately called her attention to a new line of bright yellow pans with black trimming. The suggestion was made that the yellow pans would produce a cheerful effect in the green and white kitchen. The bride was elated, and the salesperson experienced pleasure in selling the ware she would have purchased herself under the same circumstances.

Every salesperson should also be able to understand that the purchase of certain articles is an event. This is especially true in regard to large purchases for the home. Buying a new rug, a dining-room suite, an electric refrigerator, or even a washing machine is a matter of great importance to the average customer. She has planned for a long time to make this purchase. She has looked forward to the pleasure which she and the entire family will receive from this purchase. There are many instances of this kind which offer an opportunity for the salesperson to personalize her handling of the sale.

Sharing the enjoyment and satisfaction which the customer manifests in her purchase cannot fail to bring about a better understanding between the salesperson and the customer. Confidence is established, and the customer may show that she appreciates the salesperson's interest in helping her to make a wise selection.

Most customers like to feel that the salesperson is definitely and, sometimes, even exclusively interested in their personal wants and needs. Even those individuals who are extremely difficult to "sell"

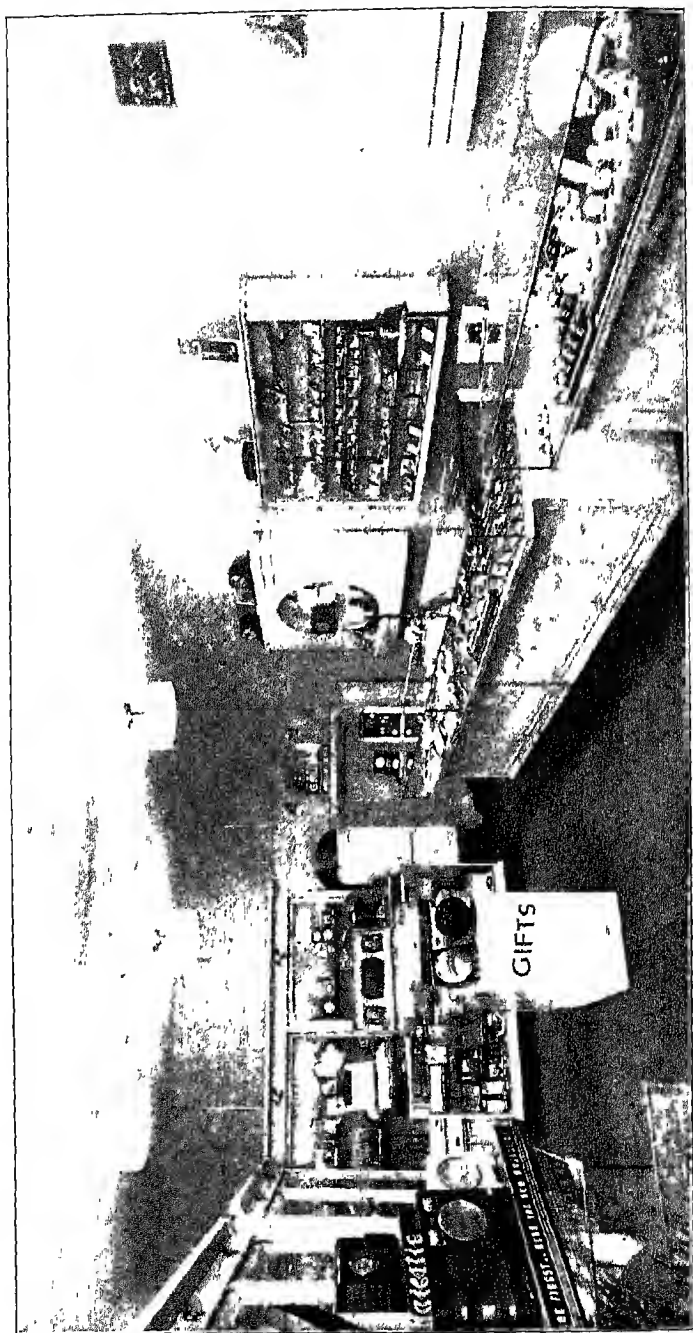
usually are won over by receiving special attention. Making the customer feel that the article she is buying is correct and the thing she should have is important in selling.

Helping others find the things which they desire makes selling a fascinating occupation and brings genuine pleasure to those engaged in it.

#### WORD STUDY

ascertained	exaggerated
accumulated	precious
procedures	stimulated
advocated	justifiable





A SETTING SUCH AS THIS AIDS IN AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF MERCHANDISE  
*Courtesy of Rolland's Jewelry Store, Chicago*

## CHAPTER XII

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### SHOWING THE MERCHANDISE EFFECTIVELY

Merchandise must usually be shown before it can be sold. This is the part of the sale where application of many principles is made. At this point, we must tie together many factors with the intention of doing the thing which will bring us success—that is, effectively present and sell merchandise. Making the approach, using right principles in showing merchandise, meeting objections, closing the sale, and suggestion selling are closely related topics that follow in logical sequence.

**Value of Effective Presentation.** One of the chief aims of every good salesperson is to improve her ability to present the goods in an effective manner. This increased ability benefits both the salesperson and the firm in which she is employed. The skill which a salesperson acquires in showing the merchandise results in her being able to make a greater number of sales, thereby increasing her earning power. At the same time she is giving more and better service to the store and its customers.

*Value to the Salesperson.* First, we shall consider the importance of a skillful display as an aid to the salesperson. Showing the goods is ordinarily the best method by which a salesperson may discover the customer's wants or needs. Only a few questions are desirable as a means of finding out what the customer has in mind. Experience has proved that showing the merchandise is a much more intelligent procedure than that of asking questions.

The first displays will be based upon the study of the customer made by the salesperson during the opening of the sale. Strict attention must be given to the first statements the customer makes after she has been approached. Some customers have a very definite idea as to what they desire, and ask for specific merchandise. The alert salesperson in this case will endeavor to meet those demands at once. The vague customer, of course, presents a problem. However, each statement she makes should lead the salesperson to closer appre-

hension of her needs. Even casual remarks must receive attention, since often they are illuminating.

A prompt display of the merchandise the customer has asked to see, or as near it as possible, is always a help in determining specific desires. Moreover, a ready perception of the customer's needs produces confidence.

Customers will usually respond with comments while the merchandise is being displayed. By listening to these comments the salesperson can more readily ascertain which articles please and which do not. It is a good plan to learn to follow the customer's interest by watching the movement of her hands as she examines and handles the articles. As she shifts back and forth from one to another it will become evident which articles arouse the greatest interest. Showing the merchandise thus becomes the best and only sure method of stimulating interest in the merchandise and determining the customer's preferences and needs.

Selling is often more difficult when dealing with people who hesitate to express their opinions frankly or refuse to talk enough to give the salesperson an idea as to what they have in mind. In such cases the way to make a beginning is to show what you hope will meet the customer's approval. At this point in the sale, close observation is necessary. In any sales situation, the salesperson benefits more from observing the customer than by talking.

The following situation illustrates how close observation and strict attention guided the salesperson. A customer approached a counter and asked to see some hand towels but gave no indication of the kind she wished to buy. The salesperson observed the customer to be fidgety and impatient. She was wearing a bright, flowered print dress with red accessories, including red costume jewelry. The salesperson decided that this customer might be interested in something unusual or different.

*Customer:* I am looking for some hand towels. What have you?

*Salesperson:* (Smiles pleasantly.) I will show you some of our newest towels. (She brings out an assortment of vivid colors and novelty patterns.)

*Customer:* (Looks them over.) Is this one pure linen?

*Salesperson:* No, it is linen crash.

*Customer:* What else have you?

(Salesperson notices that the customer had been attracted to an orange colored towel with a modernistic design on the border. She immediately displayed another group of towels—these all pure linen in bright colors.)

*Customer:* (Picks up a red linen towel with multi-colored cross-stitch border.) I like this one. How much is it?

*Salesperson:* It is \$1.25. They are very reasonable for imported linen; perhaps you would like a pair. (Holds up the two red towels away from the others.)

*Customer:* I do like them. You may send the pair. Thank you.

The salesperson in this situation made an intelligent selection because she gave her attention to the customer. She paid close attention to each question and comment and watched the customer's reaction to the initial display in order more clearly to determine what to show next. The skillful manner in which the salesperson displayed the merchandise aided in selling the additional item.

*Value to the Customer.* A careful presentation of merchandise is of greater assistance to the customer than questioning her concerning her wants. With a display of goods before her she is better able to name the specific features which she desires in the article to be purchased. Likewise the customer can judge more readily whether the article is desirable for her particular need. Additional ideas come to her mind as she examines the merchandise, especially if there are new items which possess improved features or are otherwise more attractive. Her knowledge of fashion correctness is also increased. Skillful presentation of the merchandise enhances its value in the customer's mind. Her interest and confidence are increased and, as a result, she makes her decision more quickly. Placing the goods before the customer quickens the sale and means an economy of time for both the salesperson and the customer.

**Initial Steps in Discovering the Customer's Wants.** The successful salesperson will endeavor to discover the customer's desires and needs early in the sale. There can be no established method since conditions under which selling takes place vary. The merchandise itself and the surroundings must be considered. A great deal will also depend on the customer and whether she is hurried or is shopping leisurely. The most effective way of finding out the customer's wants is by showing merchandise to her.

In order to make an intelligent selection of merchandise to show the customer, the salesperson may inquire as to the purpose or intended use which the customer has in mind. It is well to find out whether the article is to be used by the customer or is to be a gift. This point is always an important consideration for the salesperson when choosing merchandise for presentation. For example, the customer may be looking at children's books. The salesperson will ask, "Is the book for a boy or a girl?" "What age is the child?" After making a display based on the information, the salesperson may further inquire about special interests or hobbies which would influence the selection of additional books to be shown.

The salesman who has approached a customer looking at a desk, logically asks whether it is for home or office use. If for home use, the type of room, and its furnishings must be considered. Likewise, the needs of the person who will use it will be a deciding factor in the selection of a desk to be shown. This information should be drawn from the customer tactfully, however, as otherwise the customer may resent being questioned.

The specific purpose for which a customer is buying yard goods must be ascertained before making the initial display. The salesperson may ask the customer who is interested in silk material, "Do you wish this material for dress or street wear?" For drapery fabrics, questions pertaining to the type of room in which the material is to be used, other furnishings, and the color scheme may be asked.

When selling ready-to-wear it is always more pleasing to the customer to show her the correct size. The expert salesperson will have acquired the ability to judge the correct size before presenting merchandise. Measuring devices for determining sizes in shoes and gloves aid the salesperson to select suitable and correctly sized merchandise. Such devices should always be used in order to avoid embarrassment to customers who are unable to state the correct size or to those who require unusual or larger sizes. One of the important considerations in the beginning of every sale is that the salesperson make it as easy as possible for the customer to react favorably to the merchandise.

The salesperson should make a special effort to develop the ability to judge what constitutes good taste and harmony in color and design. Such knowledge is essential in selling many important

lines of merchandise, especially in ready-to-wear and house furnishings. When selling house furnishings such as drapery materials, rugs, upholstery, or art objects it is essential for the salesperson and the customer to have an understanding as to color values and fitness in order to achieve harmony with other furnishings. The salesperson may inquire as to the color scheme and furnishings as she proceeds to display articles of merchandise which seem most suitable.

Many customers have a specific color in mind when shopping for dresses, coats, and accessories. They are interested in acquiring a certain effect in their ensemble, and for this reason will be likely to state at the outset what color is desired. The same situation may exist with the customer who is shopping for furnishings for her home.

When dealing with a customer who does not state her preference in color it is better for the salesperson to offer suitable merchandise rather than inquire about color. In this situation the salesperson may safely assume that the customer is undecided as to color. It would therefore be unwise for the salesperson to limit the range of merchandise to be shown. The salesperson will determine from observation of the customer what colors will be most becoming.

It is likewise important for the salesperson selling wearing apparel such as millinery, coats, suits, and dresses to judge in general the style most suitable for a certain type of individual. This is especially valuable when showing merchandise to the customer who has not given any idea of what she desires. Those customers who seem to have no idea of what they want or what is most appropriate in style or design manifestly depend a great deal upon the salesperson for guidance in making a wise selection.

**The Initial Display.** If the customer requests certain merchandise, it is the salesperson's duty to show this particular item without question or hesitation. If the customer does not state her specific needs the salesperson will then have to rely on her own judgment as to what should be shown first. Experience has proved that it is a safe policy to show medium priced goods first unless the customer has stated a desire to see a definite article or a certain line of merchandise which would not be within this price range. In following this method an opportunity is offered the customer to state her desire for either lower priced merchandise or more expensive.

It is considered unwise to show the least expensive goods first,

since this merchandise will be inferior and will give a false impression of the quality of the goods carried. An unsatisfactory display will tend to lessen the customer's interest and cause her to become impatient at the delay. She may resent the salesperson's assumption that the least expensive line of goods is proper to her requirements—an error disastrous to a proper sales beginning. Contrarily, it is complimentary to the customer to show her the better things. Customers who are seeking bargain merchandise usually will say so, in which case the salesperson will, when possible, comply with the demand.

It is not advisable to show the most expensive goods first unless the customer is known to desire only the best. Such a display may discourage a customer and make her dissatisfied with medium or less expensive merchandise. Rather than admit her inability to purchase the highest quality merchandise she will offer a hurried excuse and leave to look elsewhere. Customers who want superior quality and are willing to pay high prices usually will indicate such a desire when the medium priced line of goods is shown them.

**Show Enough Merchandise to Satisfy the Customer.** In certain departments it is possible for a customer to be satisfied with the first articles shown. The salesperson who has a thorough knowledge of her stock will at the beginning of the sale try to determine immediately what articles seem best suited to the customer being served. It is often possible to select the right thing immediately. If the first things shown do not meet approval, other items should be presented; each time the salesperson should be more observing and careful in selecting the article to be shown. The salesperson should seem willing to show the greatest variety possible in order that the customer may feel satisfied with the salesperson's effort to please her.

**Show a Sufficient Quantity for Comparison.** The customer naturally wants to be shown a quantity of merchandise sufficient for purposes of comparison. Being able to compare one article with another helps the customer to decide. Every customer likes to feel that she has been given the opportunity to make comparison and judge for herself which article seems best adapted to her purpose.

**Avoid Confusing the Customer by Showing Too Much Merchandise.** The customer resents being limited, but on the other hand does not like to be confused by too much merchandise, therefore the wise

salesperson will concentrate on a smaller amount. The success of the sale depends on how well the merchandise is selected rather than on how much is shown. As soon as it is seen that the customer is not interested in a particular item it should be removed so that she may better concentrate on the remaining articles. If the merchandise is adapted to the customer and has been presented carefully, there should be one or two articles in the group before her that will be of interest and for which she shows a preference. Ordinarily the customer's remarks will indicate her preferences.

**Make Selling Points Specific.** The selling points should give specific and positive information about the object being considered. The salesperson should ascertain these facts for each item of goods in stock. It will be discovered after careful study that each article in stock has one or more distinguishing characteristics. In this way important selling features and definite facts instead of meaningless adjectives are used to build the sales talk.

**Make Use of Laboratory Tests.** In connection with specific selling points it is decidedly worth while to point out definite tests which have been made upon the article being considered. These tests may have been made to determine specific qualities and characteristics. Fabrics are subjected to laundry tests. Other tests are made to determine color fastness under varying conditions. These tests furnish conclusive facts and are valuable as a basis for the sales talk.

**Use Well-Chosen Statements in Showing Goods.** The statements made throughout the entire sale should be positive and, above all, truthful. The first few words often definitely effect the outcome of the sale. Good selling points, briefly but clearly stated, can be a valuable aid to a successful conclusion of the interview. It is suggested that the student read the recent work of Elmer Wheeler, who has made an intensive study of selling sentences. This book is listed in the Bibliography.

Each item of merchandise requires its own descriptive vocabulary which should convey the correct information. In Chapter IX will be found a list of words for this purpose. Phrases used in talking of one object should not be repeated in speaking of other articles. Never use adjectives alone when facts can be given. When concrete facts are used it proves that the salesperson has positive knowledge about the merchandise she is presenting.



For example, the salesperson whose only selling point when showing a dress is that it is "attractive" or "smart" or "has lots of style" or is "pretty" shows a definite lack of positive reasons why the dress might be desirable to her customer. To make matters worse, she may even repeat the same expressions as she presents a second or third choice. Naturally the customer hears nothing which will convince her that she should buy the dress. In sales situations of this kind a well-informed salesperson will state definite and positive facts about the material, its durability, the workmanship, and, most important, give reasons why the dress is suitable for the customer.

Here, again, is where observing the customer will be helpful. In selling the dress mentioned above, it becomes essential for the salesperson to decide whether her selling points should stress fashion or practical worth and excellence of workmanship. The alert salesperson will have judged the taste and general personality of the customer to the extent that her sales talk will emphasize the points which appear to have the strongest appeal.

The demonstration sale which follows is given to show how the salesperson made use of specific selling points in presenting the merchandise.

A customer approached a counter where purses were displayed. She picked up a leather bag.

*Salesperson:* The bag you have in your hand is a copy of a Paris original. It is made of genuine calfskin, which you can feel is smooth and supple.

*Customer:* I have several leather purses and I really would like something different.

*Salesperson:* (Shows the customer a novelty fabric bag.) Perhaps you would like this fabric bag. We are featuring these with monogram initials. It is made of finest wool coating material and is silk lined.

*Customer:* I am afraid a fabric bag will not wear as well as leather.

*Salesperson:* We have some fine suede bags. (Holds one toward the customer.) This bag is fine quality imported suede. The patent leather trim is new and quite distinctive combined with the suede. (Customer holds it as if she were actually carrying the purse.) It would harmonize perfectly with your suede gloves and shoes. And

you know suede is dressy enough for all occasions as well as practical too.

(Customer examines the purse both inside and outside.)

*Salesperson:* The lining is all silk crepe. You will notice the fittings include a zipper pocket for coins and a large vanity compartment.

*Customer:* I like this bag very much. What is the price?

*Salesperson:* The price is \$5.00, which is quite reasonable for a bag of this quality.

*Customer:* I will take it. Please send it.

*Salesperson:* I know you will be pleased with this one, and it will look well with the costume you are wearing.

(Salesperson takes her name and address and thanks her cordially.)

In this sale, the salesperson has made use of the following selling points: imported suede material, distinctive patent leather trimming, harmony with other accessories, practicability and appropriateness for the purpose intended, quality silk lining, and the special features, which included the zipper pocket and vanity compartment.

**Show the Merchandise in Use.** A special effort should be made to demonstrate the merchandise as the customer actually will use it. This method helps the salesperson to make effective use of the selling points, and at the same time enables the customer to see how the article will be used in her own possession.

Often it is possible for the customer to take part in the demonstration. The actual "doing" means more in creating desire than merely looking on. The salesperson demonstrating a new, improved gas range asks the customer to try the automatic burners to convince her of the ease with which they may be turned on or off. Likewise, in selling such products as vacuum cleaners, the customer will be urged to operate the cleaner herself. The demonstrator showing electric laundry equipment will invite the customer to sit down and run a few pieces through the electric ironer. As the customer comes to realize the ease with which the device is operated, her desire for ownership is greatly increased and the sale is more quickly accomplished.

Demonstration of the article in actual use is effective when selling many kinds of wares. For this reason all leading department stores

and specialty stores are realizing more and more the importance of showing goods in their natural setting. Furniture dealers exhibit model rooms, where furniture appropriate to each room is placed just as it would be found in a home. Table linens, china, and glassware are displayed to demonstrate their actual use in service, ranging from an informal breakfast arrangement to the most elaborate dinner display. Such exhibits have proved highly valuable in retail selling. As a result, people are becoming accustomed to this sort of thing and



Effort Should Be Made to Demonstrate the Merchandise as the Customer Will Use It

*Courtesy of Sears, Roebuck and Co.*

before making such purchases have every right to expect the salesperson to make her demonstration as the article will be used. For instance, a customer who is being shown a set of dinnerware will expect to have it shown to her on a dining room table in order that she may see how it will appear in her own dining room. Table linen also should be displayed on a full size dining table. The customer who is buying draperies or curtains must see them arranged on a window fixture in the store. Again, a person choosing a pair of vases for her living room mantel wants to see them displayed apart from the rest of the stock, possibly upon a shelf or wherever the salesperson

may find space in the department that will provide a suitable background.

Positive demonstrations are also to be made in selling wearing apparel. The salesperson who shows a blouse held against the body, with the waistline pulled in place, establishes a more definite reason for buying than if she had merely held the blouse up for the customer's inspection. How much more effective the display becomes when the customer is invited to hold the blouse against the suit she is wearing to determine if the color is becoming and a pleasing accent to her costume. The same device is employed when the customer is permitted to slip the dainty lace collar gently over her head to see how it looks with her frock. Such demonstrations show the merchandise as the purchaser intends to use it, and no other means of selling is more productive of satisfactory results.

**Win the Customer's Agreement on Selling Points.** During the course of the demonstration, and as the specific selling points are being given, the salesperson will endeavor to get the customer to agree with these points step by step. The tactful salesperson will never ask the customer bluntly, "Do you like this?" but, instead, will make it possible for the customer to acquire a favorable frame of mind. For example the salesperson selling a set of dinnerware may win the customer's agreement on such points as the following: The quaintness of this pattern would be ideal with your Colonial furniture, wouldn't it? Won't this gay floral design with the blue glassware make a bright and cheerful combination? The graceful simplicity in the design of each piece will be a source of pleasure to you in years to come, since it will never become tiresome or uninteresting. To these points, the customer will find it easy to agree. In this way the salesperson leads the customer over the important points and helps her to sell herself. The customer then feels that the decision is her own, and this is highly desirable.

When the sale has reached the place where the customer begins to indicate her preferences and her attention is becoming centered on these items, the salesperson will begin to concentrate the sales talk in an effort to aid in the final decision. This step constitutes an essential part of the procedure in closing the sale. The chapter on closing the sale will continue the selling process from this point to the actual close.

## WORD STUDY

effectively  
progressive  
presentation

invariably  
primarily  
exclusive

## CHAPTER XIII

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### OBJECTIONS AND HOW TO MEET THEM

A study of the selling process must necessarily include a discussion of objections which customers raise during the course of a sale. These objections must, of course, be met and overcome to the customer's satisfaction before the sale can be made. Objections may form an important part of every sale, regardless of the type of merchandise or the form of selling which is being used.

In this chapter the student may gain familiarity with the objections most frequently heard by salespeople. These cover a wide range and are as varied as are people. Invariably, certain objections that are offered are based upon the personal characteristics and peculiarities of that individual. For example, the customer who thinks in terms of "price" will be likely to make an objection such as, "The price is too high," "I can get it for less," or, "It is more than I want to pay."

Customers who hesitate to make decisions or who desire to give a great deal of thought to a contemplated purchase will often offer such objections as, "I want to think it over," "I can't decide now," or, "I must consult someone else." Likewise, there are many people who are habitual "shoppers" and who make a practice of shopping in many stores when they are looking for a certain piece of merchandise. In this case the customer will usually offer an excuse of indecision rather than admit her intention of looking in other stores to compare values.

There are objections, however, which question the quality of the merchandise or its suitability. Objections of this nature are many times justified. It becomes necessary for the salesperson to answer such an objection. Situations of this kind should always be handled in a pleasant and understanding manner. The customer may be trying to decide whether the pleasure and satisfaction she expects to get will warrant the expenditure. The well-informed salesperson will be able to meet these situations in such a manner that not only will the

objection be overcome but the customer's confidence will be strengthened. In general it may be stated that the salesperson must endeavor to recognize honest objections and judge which are to be accepted for what they are and which will require analysis. The following suggestions are to be observed in meeting objections or other difficult selling situations.

**Acknowledge the Objection.** When an objection is made it must be acknowledged in order to let the customer know that you are giving attention to her remarks, and also to let her feel that you are interested in her reaction to the merchandise. The salesperson should agree with the customer in a courteous and gracious manner, but will immediately attempt to convince her that the points in favor of the article far outweigh those which are unfavorable. For example, a pair of shoes built to be sturdy and practical may be lacking in appeal from the standpoint of beauty. However, the satisfaction in having a comfortable shoe may more than compensate for the fact it is plain.

**Present the Facts.** Objections often indicate the customer's desire to know more definitely about certain features of the article. The facts should be presented without hesitation in a positive, straightforward manner. Any attempt to evade the objection will indicate either a lack of fundamental knowledge or a desire to withhold information. Such an attitude causes the customer to lose confidence. Answer all questions truthfully regardless of the effect upon the immediate sale.

**Keep a Pleasant Atmosphere.** To openly contradict an objection arouses resentment and usually results in the customer abruptly walking away or losing interest. It is to be remembered that the customer must be satisfied with what she is buying. It is always better salesmanship to convince the customer through tactful suggestions and well-displayed merchandise than by argumentative methods. A pleasant atmosphere is always more agreeable to successful selling.

**Try to Use the Objection to an Advantage.** The alert salesperson will attempt to watch for objections or questions which may be used to strengthen the sales talk. To do this requires strict attention to the customer's remarks, a definite knowledge of specific selling points, and quick thinking on the part of the salesperson. As an illustration, a customer wished to buy a dress for her daughter at college. A two-

piece model with a lace vestee was shown her. The customer objected that the lace vestee would have to be removed for laundering. The salesperson replied, "We have found this model very popular with college and business girls because they particularly like this changeable feature. It is removed easily, and other vestees or collar sets may be substituted, which makes the dress seem new and different with each change." The customer agreed and felt quite sure her daughter in college would really enjoy this type of dress.

**Price Objections.** Customers who object to the price when shown high quality goods should be convinced of the true worth of the article and the reasons for the price. The salesperson will endeavor in this case to stress the greater service of the goods, the amount of pleasure derived from its use, its better quality, and other points of advantage. The greatest element for success is the salesperson's complete knowledge of the goods she is selling so that all points of importance will be brought to the customer's attention. Above all, in dealing with the type who wishes to economize, but who can afford the best, the salesperson must emphasize the long-run economy of buying the better quality of goods.

*"The price is too high."* Again, as in other price objections, the best method is to establish the quality of the merchandise in the customer's mind. Her objection is raised because she does not know why the merchandise is priced as it is. The price can be justified by pointing out to her all the details in regard to finer materials, more expert workmanship, better construction, or any special features which add to the expense of producing the goods. The salesperson must be able to express in a positive and convincing manner her specific selling points. The customer will be convinced when she understands the qualities about the goods which account for the price asked.

To show how the objection might be overcome, the following situation is given: A customer wished to buy a silk costume slip. She objected to the price when told it was \$3.95. The salesperson told her there were less expensive garments in stock but that this particular slip had special features found only in the finest garments. She then asked the customer to feel the quality of the material and to inspect the seams, which were finished so that the slip could be worn on either side. She also pointed out the absence of rough, unfinished



edges, emphasized the noncurl hemline to prevent sagging, the four-gore alternating bias cut to avoid twisting and pulling, and as a last important selling point she explained that it was cut three inches wider in the hips, thus preventing pulled out seams. These features accounted for difference in price, and the salesperson's knowledge of the merchandise convinced the customer of the excellent quality.

Selling prices vary many times because of sudden changes in market conditions. Customers are often not familiar with these changes and are unaware of advances in price until they come in contact with the situation. Salespeople must keep abreast of these changes and be able to give accurate information concerning market trends. For example, a customer entered a shoe store to buy a pair of shoes at the beginning of the fall season. Several months had passed since she had last bought shoes. Prices had advanced on all incoming fall stock. The customer made the following objection when told the price of the shoes. "I buy a pair of these shoes each fall for street wear. That is more than I have ever paid for this shoe." The salesman replied, "All shoes are advanced in price this fall. The price of leather has advanced and you will find all leather goods higher priced this season than last."

*"I didn't wish to pay that much."* This objection is quite common. Most customers have in mind approximately what amount they can pay for certain things. After looking at the merchandise they wish to purchase they find that they will have to pay more than they had expected for the quality desired. It then becomes a question of paying more or buying less expensive merchandise.

Objection is then raised, and it becomes necessary for the salesperson to meet it. The methods of overcoming the objection follow those discussed for other price objections. The customer who seems able to afford the article, even though it is more than she expected to pay, may be convinced of the increased amount of service and satisfaction to be had from the better article. An appeal may be made to knowledge of better values. For example, a customer wished to buy a hat and expected to pay \$5.00 for it. She was unable to find a hat for \$5.00 that suited her, and the kind of hat she desired was priced at \$7.50. She did not want to pay \$7.50. The salesperson explained that the model was more exclusive and convinced her that since the hat was really what she wanted and was most becoming, she

should not hesitate to pay the extra amount. The customer bought the hat and was pleased over her purchase.

The customer who will not pay more than she expected, but instead will be satisfied with a less expensive article, should be shown just as much consideration in the selection of goods. For her purpose perhaps the less expensive article will prove satisfactory. A customer wants an inexpensive dress. She objects to the price of the model shown her. "I like the dress, but I just have to stay within my price limit." In response to this remark the salesperson replies, "I'll be glad to see what else we have. Perhaps something along the same general style." The salesperson finds a dress of similar style, but of less expensive material and workmanship, and displays it to the customer. "This material is tub silk and launders very well," she remarks. "It is guaranteed fast color. I am sure it will be a practical dress for every purpose."

*"I will wait until it is marked down."* In meeting this objection the salesperson who is familiar with the stock and the policy of the store in regard to marking down merchandise will be able to defend the present price. Some types of merchandise are seldom marked down, and in this case the salesperson will emphasize this fact.

The use or wear which may be lost by deferring the purchase is a persuasive argument against waiting. The satisfaction in having the right thing at the right time is also to be suggested. In wearing apparel such as shoes, dresses, and coats, the range of sizes becomes very limited on marked-down goods. The specific article in which the customer is interested will no doubt be gone, and this fact may also help to overcome the objection.

*"I haven't enough money with me."* The plan of sending merchandise out C.O.D. is always suggested. In such a situation a deposit may be required, the balance to be paid upon delivery of the package. This requirement will depend upon the store's policy. A deposit is considered an advantage to the store, of course, since there is little probability of the goods being refused at the door because the customer has changed her mind if she has paid even a small amount as part payment. In a C.O.D. sale it is well for the salesperson to make a definite arrangement with the customer as to the date of the delivery. This objection may also be met by suggesting the "will call system," in which the purchase may be held until some future date.

Suggesting the opening of a charge account is another means of overcoming this objection. This, of course, will be in accordance with store regulations in regard to charge accounts. The salesperson should use discrimination in suggesting a charge account to all types of customers. Good judgment shown in this situation will save both the customer and the store much embarrassment in cases where charge credit would seem to be unwise.

*Other Price Objections.* In large department stores, there may be found a duplication in the basement and on other floors. These items may be identical or only similar. Identical merchandise should be priced the same whether it is carried in the basement or on the upper floors. The objection is offered when the article may appear to be identical but close examination will show that it is only similar and perhaps made by a different manufacturer, which will account for the difference in price. The following experience is a good case in point. A customer was shopping for a silver sugar and creamer set. She saw one set in the basement at \$4.95 and another one on the upper floor at \$6.95. To her, they were identical. She objected to the price and said, "I saw the same thing in the basement for \$4.95." The salesperson was not disturbed and very quietly remarked, "I'll be glad to investigate the matter immediately. There is surely a mistake, since competition between departments is not permitted. I would be pleased to have you accompany me to the basement in order to adjust the difference." The set in the basement was identical in design but was made of lighter metal by a different manufacturer and was inferior in workmanship. The customer purchased the set on the upper floor at \$6.95.

*"I can get this cheaper somewhere else."* In order to meet this objection frankly the salesperson must not only be sure of her own merchandise but should be familiar with the same line of goods handled by competitors. It is obvious from this objection that the customer has inspected the articles in question at some other store. She evidently was not satisfied with the less expensive article elsewhere or she would have bought it. Therefore, there is opportunity to convince her of the superiority of the higher priced article in your own store. This can be done by giving definite facts and information, and by emphasizing the special features point by point in order to establish a basis for comparison. In this situation it is considered

advisable to use a few well-chosen questions to further this comparison. For example, the salesperson may ask, "Did you notice whether the material of the garment was identical to this in texture, weight, and finish?" "Was it all silk or rayon?" "Did you examine the lining?"

To strengthen these inquiries the salesperson may add, "We also have the lower priced goods. Perhaps you would like to compare them yourself." The lower priced article and the better one are shown together and carefully compared. No attempt will be made to "run down" the lower priced article. The difference is usually quite obvious. This method tactfully convinces the customer that she was mistaken in her idea that the merchandise was the same. By handling the objection in this way the customer usually decides in favor of the higher priced article.

**Objections to Probable Satisfaction, Practicability, Durability, or Appropriateness.** With the present interest, and consequent increase, in merchandise knowledge on the part of the consumer, these objections are worthy of careful attention. The sale may depend upon satisfying answers to them. The following are typical objections:

"The material may fade."

"I do not believe this coat will be warm."

"This dress is not practical."

"I don't think these sheets will wear well."

"I don't think it will be appropriate."

"It will not fit in with the other furnishings."

In the discussion which follows these objections are met and overcome, and the general principles used in each case will be found applicable in similar situations when objections of this kind are made.

*"The material may fade."* The customer may have two things in mind by this objection, "Will it fade when laundered?" or "Is it sunfast?" The former question is often advanced by the customer who is shopping for children's clothes, men's shirts, house dresses, and yard goods. The question of materials being sunfast is raised in regard to upholstery and draperies as well as dress fabrics.

When answering objections concerning color fastness, the salesperson must have positive information that the material will not fade. A guarantee of fast color is persuasive usually; or a piece of the material which has stood the test of laundering may be displayed as

proof of its non-fading quality. Such demonstrations are convincing.

In regard to materials being sunfast, the objection should be met squarely, and, above all, the salesperson should be truthful in any statements she makes. Whenever laboratory tests have been made or where there is undeniable proof, positive statements can be made with utmost confidence. Care should be taken to avoid misrepresentation of this feature of the merchandise.

*"I do not believe this coat will be warm."* The following transaction will illustrate how this objection may be overcome. The customer wished to buy a winter coat. She had been wearing a fur coat, but had decided she would buy a cloth coat, provided she was able to get one that was warm enough. After trying on several garments she began to show special interest in one coat. She said, "I like this coat, but it seems so light in weight that I feel sure it will not be warm enough." The salesperson replied, "The fabric in this coat is one hundred per cent wool, which gives it extra warmth without the excess weight which so many mixed materials have. As you perhaps know, a coat which is heavy in weight is not always the warmest. This garment is warmly interlined. It also has the added feature of extra windproof chambray lining from the shoulder to the waistline. The large shawl collar will be warm and snug around the face. You will find this coat exceptionally warm." The customer purchased the garment and had the satisfaction of feeling that it was as warm as a cloth coat could be.

*"This dress is not practical."* This objection is quite frequently used and salespeople handling ready-made dresses must know definite facts about each dress in stock in order truthfully to state why the dress is more practical than one would judge it to be. These illustrations are quite common: "The material will not clean well," or "This kind of material will stretch out of shape."

Salespeople must always give expert advice on such points as the proper care and methods of cleaning certain materials. Perhaps the light trimming is only basted on and may be removed easily for cleaning purposes. Suggestions must be given as to the advisability of washing certain fabrics or having them dry cleaned. Dresses knit of yarn or other materials which stretch require special care. Make definite selling points on all those features which go to make a dress more practical and wearable. Information concerning care to prolong

the wearability of a garment not only helps to overcome objections that are raised, but results in a better satisfied customer.

*"I don't think these sheets will wear well."* This objection is one that may be applied to linens, such as sheets, pillow-cases, towel-ing, and table linens. Again it is necessary to stress the importance of the salesperson having an accurate knowledge of the merchandise. In sheets, for example, the well-informed salesperson will be able to refer to results obtained through laboratory tests to prove the strength and long-wearing qualities. To further overcome the objection, compare different sheets according to the thread count, and thus convince the customer of the strength of the weave. As, for example, a thread count of 72 by 72 threads per inch makes a stronger weave (which means longer wear) than a count of 64 by 64 threads per inch. The salesperson may also explain that the invisible woven-in reinforcements down the center and along the sides, where wear is greatest, gives an added amount of strength and use. These definite facts will increase the customer's confidence in the merchandise and will satisfy her desire to know definitely about the wearing qualities of the merchandise. The discussion on cotton textiles in the chapters on Merchandise Information will give the reader a better understanding of selling points of this kind.

*"I don't think it will be appropriate."* The customer who shows evidence of knowing exactly what type of clothes she should wear or what is appropriate for the need in mind, should be respected for her good judgment, and special effort must be made to show her the type of things she demands. It would be poor salesmanship ever to question her judgment or insist upon showing things which are not of the kind she has specified.

The customer who knows that a particular hat is not becoming will have every right to resent being told, "How lovely it looks on you," or, "It is so becoming." Good salesmanship demands that every salesperson strive to develop a knowledge of what constitutes good taste in color, fashion, and design.

Handling the customer who has poor ideas as to what is appropriate or becoming is even more difficult. The stout lady who yearns for the gaudy, large patterned print dress presents a problem in tact and diplomacy. She insists upon buying what is unbecoming because she can't resist the temptation. The dress is delivered and, after

unfavorable comments are passed by the family, this customer is so dissatisfied and disappointed she decides to return the dress. This situation might have been saved by a salesperson who was able tactfully to guide her customer into a more appropriate selection. In doing so great care must be taken to avoid offense, or insinuation that her judgment is poor. Selling goods which are not suitable or appropriate reacts unfavorably on the store and its salespeople, and should be avoided if at all possible.

When selling household furnishings the question of appropriateness often becomes an objection. The salesperson must first of all find out how the article is to be used, or the purpose it is intended to serve. As an illustration, a housewife wished to buy a new davenport for her living room. The salesperson showed davenports upholstered in a variety of materials, the majority of which were imported friezes and silk damasks. The customer evinced little interest and, finally, mentioned that she must have something which could stand hard and constant wear, since there were three young boys in the family. The objection was soon overcome by showing davenports upholstered in sturdy fabrics for severe service.

*"It will not fit in with the other furnishings."* The following illustration demonstrates why a knowledge of color and color harmony is essential for salespeople who sell house furnishings of any kind. This knowledge is used in overcoming objections concerning whether the article in question will fit in with the other furnishings of a room.

*Salesperson:* The bowl you are looking at is one of our newest designs. It is an unusual shade of red, don't you think?

*Customer:* Yes, it is a beautiful color. I'm looking for a bowl to use as a center piece on my dining-room table.

*Salesperson:* May I ask what color predominates in your room?

*Customer:* There is more blue than any other color in the room. That is why I'm afraid this red bowl will be inappropriate.

*Salesperson:* I'm sure you will find a touch of red in a blue room most attractive. Blue being a cold color, I would suggest that red will supply a note of warmth.

*Customer:* Perhaps you are right.

*Salesperson:* I am quite sure it will be correct. In fact our decorators say that every room needs a touch of red, and this bowl is exceptionally attractive.

*Customer:* I will take it; thank you so much for helping me.

*Salesperson:* I am always glad to help my customers find the right thing. Thank you.

**Other Objections.** There are numerous objections which may be classified under this general heading. It is difficult and often impossible to determine whether the objection is merely an excuse used as a means of escape, or whether the customer is sincere in the statement. In either case the salesperson will use the best possible methods to meet the objection as given. Some of the most common of this group are as follows:

"I prefer to look around before I decide."

"I would rather not decide now."

"I must talk it over with my husband (or friend)."

"I don't need it now."

These objections and suggestions for meeting them will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

*"I prefer to look around before I decide."* Meeting this objection in a gracious manner is a real test of the salesperson's ability. Poise and self-control must be maintained above all else. The salesperson who makes it obvious that she resents this objection loses the good will of the customer as well as her respect and confidence. It reveals a definite lack of courtesy when a salesperson abruptly dismisses the customer and hastily begins to clear away the rejected merchandise in an impatient manner. By such behavior all possible chance for the customer to reconsider the goods is lost.

To meet this objection successfully the salesperson will attempt to find out exactly what the customer wishes to purchase and proceed to make a suitable display. Show sufficient quantity for purposes of comparison. Make the selling points clear and definite. Demonstrate the merchandise in use, and in such a way as to arouse a strong desire to own the article.

If the customer seems undecided and expresses a desire to look around still further, the salesperson will be pleasantly agreeable but will urge her to make a careful comparison with the other merchandise. Never indicate in voice or manner that you are trying to prevent her from looking elsewhere, or that you are afraid she may find something more desirable than the merchandise you have offered. Such an attitude will only make her more determined to do so.



It is always well to remember in meeting a situation of this kind that it is not only a matter of the merchandise competing, but it is a question of one salesperson's ability against another's. The customer will be likely to return to the salesperson who has been most tactful. Make an effort to sell yourself along with the merchandise and the chances are strongly in favor of the customer deciding that it isn't necessary to look elsewhere.

*"I would rather not decide now."* This objection indicates indecision which may be the result of these factors: (1) The customer may not have confidence in her own judgment; (2) she may not be entirely convinced that the article is what she wants to purchase; (3) she may be concerned about the advisability of the expenditure for other reasons. In trying to overcome the objection the salesperson will rely on the observations she has made during the sales interview. Stress those points which seem to have interested the customer most. Recall her comments, and make her feel that, after all, she liked many features of the article. Emphasizing these points tends to center her interest on the most desirable qualities and may convince her that it is just as well to make the purchase now rather than wait to think it over.

If the objection appears to be given only to cover up the real objection, then the salesperson will try to discover what is the real cause of indecision. It may be price, or quality, or the feeling that a better value can be found in another store. If the salesperson is able to "draw out" this underlying cause for delay in making the decision, the sale is well on its way to a successful close.

There are many people who are just naturally overcautious and hesitate to make a quick decision. A customer who is deliberate must be handled with an appreciation of this characteristic and the objection, *"I would rather not decide now,"* is best overcome by a courteous and gracious reply, such as, *"We want you to be perfectly satisfied and we realize that such a purchase deserves careful consideration. We shall be happy to serve you when you have decided."* The salesperson may add, *"If you decide to purchase, I shall be glad to have you call me, if it is not convenient for you to come in."* Always give the customer your card and telephone number and assure her that you will give her order prompt attention. In a situation of this kind if the customer has shown a great deal of interest, there is every reason to

believe that this purchase will eventually be made. The salesperson who sells her own personality and the service of the store will have built up the confidence that causes such customers to return to the store, and to the salesperson, when a decision to purchase is reached.

An offer to send the merchandise out on approval can be made only in agreement with the policy of the store. The customer who hesitates to make up her mind in the store usually will welcome such a privilege and appreciates the opportunity of seeing the goods in actual use. It also relieves her of the fear that she will regret her purchase, since it may be returned. It is to be clearly understood, however, that discretion must be used and that such suggestions will depend upon store practice and the nature of the merchandise.

*"I must talk it over with my husband."* Again it usually becomes necessary to decide whether the objection is sincere or just an excuse. In such cases the salesperson will find it wise to assume the objection to be sincere and proceed on this basis. Many times wives will "shop around" looking for an article in which there may be partner interest. The contemplated purchase may be a gift for a friend or some member of the family, a gift for a business associate, the husband's secretary, or any number of possibilities, including the selection of important items for the home. The husband has no time for shopping, therefore the chore devolves upon the wife; but when the time comes for a decision, consultation is necessary.

In situations of this kind, the circumstances may vary a great deal in each instance. First, assure the customer by saying, "We want you both to be satisfied," but at the same time endeavor to get her to rely on her own judgment. If the husband's presence is really an essential factor, it may be possible to get in touch with him at once. If a telephone call seems unsatisfactory, suggest having the husband come in to look at the merchandise, "I'm sure he will be glad to come in and look at it, too. I shall be glad to help him." If the husband cannot come into the store, and if the store policy permits, then one may suggest sending the article out so that both may see it and have time to talk it over. Today, however, the returned goods problem is such that this suggestion should be considered only as a last resort.

In selling wearing apparel, the objection may be overcome in the same general manner. It usually will be offered merely as an excuse,

however, in this type of merchandise. If the husband really did have the final word on the desirability of a hat or dress which his wife is considering, he would be likely to be with her. It is to be remembered, especially concerning ladies' ready-to-wear, that most husbands do not enjoy this sort of shopping and are, therefore, content to leave selection to the good taste and judgment of the wife. The salesperson then has every right to say, "I think your husband will trust your own good judgment," or, "If you like it, no doubt he will be pleased too."

If the customer still hesitates it may be wise to suggest taking the article home for approval. This must be done according to regulations regarding returns or those prescribing time limits for return of merchandise. The salesperson may add, "I'm sure when you get it home your husband will like it too."

*"I don't need it now."* The amount of interest which the customer has exhibited over the article is a factor in determining how much effort should be put forth to overcome the objection. Granting that the interest has been sufficient to indicate that the customer really does need the article but wishes to postpone buying it on account of price, or for some other reason, the salesperson should first attempt to show her the advisability of making such purchase. The merchandise should be well displayed and a special demonstration given to show its use or purpose. Emphasize the time or labor-saving element in devices of this kind, especially in such merchandise as electrical appliances. For example, the housewife may be attracted to a new and improved electric iron. She tells herself, "I don't need it now." The salesperson can show her that keeping her old iron is really false economy. The improved model is so light in weight. Less electricity is needed because less time is required to complete the task, consequently, the saving involved soon makes up the cost of the new iron. Always emphasize the economy which is realized from an improved household utility. Any points which bear upon the pleasure or satisfaction derived from its use are also effective in overcoming this objection.

The objection may be heard in connection with a supplementary purchase, or when suggestion selling is attempted. For example, a customer purchases a shirt and the tie is suggested. He does not need the tie, but the tie suggested is perfect with the shirt. The salesperson

convinces the customer of the added enjoyment which he will receive from the combination.

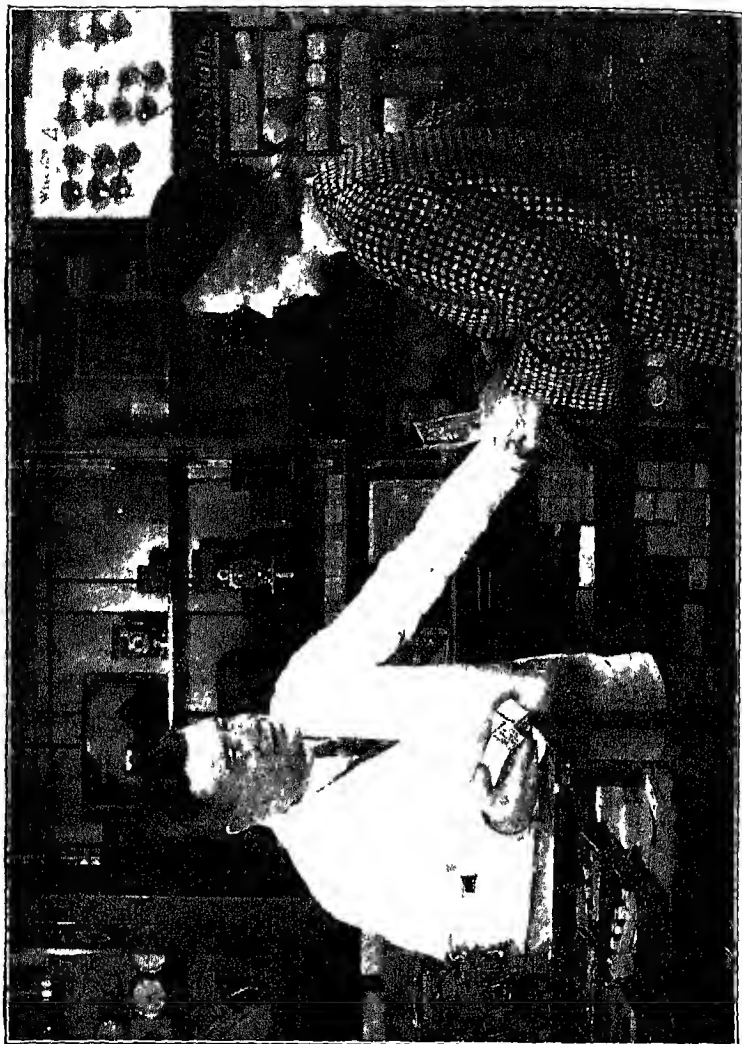
When market conditions are uncertain and there is evidence of an immediate rise in prices, the customer may be convinced of the advisability of buying now in anticipation of future needs. This method of overcoming "I don't need it now" should be used only when there is absolute truth in the information and such trends are certain.

The following chapter on closing the sale will show the student more clearly how meeting the objections affects the close of the sale. Customer's objections may arise any time during the sale, and they must be overcome to the customer's satisfaction before the sale can be closed.

#### WORD STUDY

objection  
acknowledge  
contemplate

mutual  
suitability  
identical



**CLOSING THE SALE IN AN AGREEABLE AND PLEASANT MANNER KEEPS THE CUSTOMER  
FAVORABLY INCLINED TOWARD THE STORE**

*Courtesy of National Cash Register Company, Dayton, Ohio*

## CHAPTER XIV

### CLOSING THE SALE

The final step in making a sale will now be discussed. It is assumed that the student will by this time have acquired a knowledge of the essential factors which enter a selling situation, namely, opening the sale, showing the goods, and meeting objections. The next step, closing the sale, follows in natural order.

**Factors Which Influence Closing the Sale.** The effort which must be put forth to close the sale will depend very much upon the way the preceding steps of the sale have been handled. Of course, customers and sales situations vary and the closing may be easy or difficult. In general, the close of the sale will follow much more easily when a favorable impression has been made at the opening. Likewise, the way the merchandise was presented or demonstrated has a decided influence upon how a sale may be closed. A sales interview that has been conducted with skill and intelligence is more likely to close with little effort.

**Bringing the Sale to a Close.** In general, the following steps are necessary to bring the sale to a close: (1) find out the customer's preferences; (2) center the customer's attention by eliminating other pieces of merchandise, and (3) concentrate the selling efforts on the article most preferred.

*Find Out the Customer's Preferences.* First of all, of course, it is necessary to find out whether the customer seems satisfied with the selection before her and if there are certain articles from the group which arouse a definite interest. The way the customer examines the merchandise and the attention she gives to the salesperson's remarks indicate her interest. For example, the customer may ask, "Are these handkerchiefs hand made?", "Will this dress fade?", or "Are these towels pure linen?" After she has indicated that she does not care to see a further selection, and when she begins to show a preference for a certain article, it is wise to stop showing more merchandise. To keep on showing other things only confuses her and increases her

hesitancy. For example, a customer is looking at a selection of collar and cuff sets on the table before her. She may have eliminated all except one or two, and her preference is thus indicated to the salesperson. When she tries a particular collar several times and admires it more each time she holds it against her dress, her real preference becomes established.

*Center the Customer's Attention.* It is quite possible that a sale can be lost unless the customer's attention is centered on a particular article.

An important element in centering the customer's attention is that of laying aside those pieces of merchandise which fail to interest or do not please her. This step requires considerable skill and tact and the salesperson should make a special study of learning how to lay aside merchandise. A technique should be worked out which is most convenient and applicable to the type of goods being sold. Such a procedure will depend upon the space and facilities present for displaying goods.

The object of acquiring skill in this particular is to avoid making the customer feel uncomfortable or hurried. Customers often resent the way salespeople go about putting back merchandise which has been brought out for consideration. The customer may get the impression that the salesperson wants to rush the sale or is more concerned about getting the stock back in place than in showing goods and assisting the customer. Therefore, putting merchandise aside should be done discreetly.

Those articles which are of small interest to the customer may be put to one side, or any that have been rejected. The selection remaining before the customer will then be reduced to a choice of two or three items. From this group the salesperson will assist as far as possible in making a selection.

*Concentrate on Preferred Articles.* At this point in the process of making a sale it is assumed that the customer has shown a decided interest in one or possibly two of the articles being considered. She has indicated that there are desirable qualities which appeal to her. She may like certain features of one article and other features of another. It is important that the salesperson be able to give all the fundamental points of information as they apply to the customer and her needs. When the customer is weighing the merits of one article

against another, one single feature may prove to be the deciding factor.

*Repeat Strong Selling Points.* The salesperson who has observed those features of a piece of merchandise which seemed to interest a customer most will naturally recall them to the customer's mind. Any specific point which the customer has expressed approval of should be emphasized. Other selling points will also be repeated. These selling points should be directed to meet the definite needs of the customer.

*Repeat the Demonstration if Necessary.* Further demonstration of the merchandise is another valuable aid in assisting her in making a decision. Any demonstration which makes the customer more familiar with the article, its uses and purposes, will tend to strengthen her desire to purchase. Displaying the article to a better advantage in order more clearly to show how it will appear in actual use is always effective. Likewise, explaining its use with other articles which the customer already has is suggestible. Showing the merchandise in a better light or in daylight is an important part of the demonstration. Changing the position from one place to another often brings out qualities of the merchandise previously overlooked. These selling principles are applicable to various lines of merchandise.

**Conditions Relative to Closing the Sale.** There are certain conditions which should be present at the point of closing the sale. These conditions are that the customer's objections will have been met, and that she will have indicated approval of the merchandise and agreement with the advantages in features called to her attention.

There can be no definite rule established as to the precise moment at which the sale may be closed. Again, as in the preceding steps, a great deal will depend upon the customer. Usually the customer who knows exactly what she wants will be able to make up her mind promptly. If one of the articles pleases her, the sale will be closed easily and quickly when the customer says, "I'll decide on this one, I believe," or, "You may send me this, please." Likewise, if she does not like the merchandise she will inform the salesperson in a decided manner and leave without delay.

It must be emphasized that an attempt should be made to secure a decision from the customer as soon as it is likely to be favorable. This does not mean a hurried sale, but only that endeavor should be made to close the sale at a favorable time.



Caution may prove necessary in bringing the sale to a close, especially when it concerns giving the customer personal advice. If the customer shows confidence in the salesperson to the extent that she seeks your advice, then it should be given honestly and without bias. The real merits of the merchandise in the case should be the basis for the opinion.

In dealing with customers who are quite decided in their opinions or indicate by their manner that advice is unwelcome, the salesperson will offer alert but unobtrusive attention.

At the closing point, it is wise for the salesperson to cease talking long enough for the customer to really "think through" to a decision. It is equally wise to cease talking after the customer has made up her mind. There should never be a feeling of pressure in bringing the customer to a decision. Every customer wants to feel that her decision is her own. The customer who buys against her better judgment or who is overpersuaded does not remain "sold," and is eventually dissatisfied with her purchase.

**Changes and Alterations as an Aid to Final Decision.** The salesperson who is thoroughly familiar with her merchandise is often able to make suggestions for alterations which may not only improve the article but perhaps also render it more suitable to the particular individual. To do this requires skill and experience as well as knowledge.

Careful discrimination must be observed in suggesting alterations. But where they are really needed and the sale will be lost without them, they deserve consideration. Many times they are slight and the cost is low, or the customer will express willingness to stand the expense incurred.

Wearing apparel such as dresses, coats, suits, and hats are most likely to require alterations. There are many customers who find it practically impossible to find garments which do not have to be altered to make them more becoming or to improve the fit. For instance, a dress must be made shorter, or taken in at the seams, or perhaps the waistline be raised or lowered. Changes in the appearance and fit of the sleeves are very often means of improving a dress. Or even more common are changes in the neckline by a variation of neckwear accessories such as collars, scarfs, or jeweled ornaments. Hats, for example, may often be made more attractive

by the addition of a veil, a feather, or other appropriate trimming.

These suggestions for changes are becoming more and more useful in selling merchandise, as a result of consumer education. The customer of today expects and demands that the things she buys must meet her exact requirements. In order to make a sale it is often necessary to cater to the customer's slightest whim regarding her likes and dislikes. This phase of selling will include the art of suggesting changes and alterations that will make the merchandise better suited to the individual. Therefore, the salesperson who desires to be successful must keep abreast of these trends in modern retailing.

The salesperson will, of course, become familiar with the facilities which the store has for taking care of alterations. Never suggest anything which may be difficult or impossible to accomplish. Whenever special problems in making the requested alterations are presented, it will be necessary to consult the buyer or someone in authority, who will then discuss the matter with the customer. Salespeople should always consult the proper authority as to charges for alterations.

**Aids in Obtaining a Decision.** The salesperson may bring about the desired close by tactful questions relative to the purchase.

Those questions, which invite the customer to state her preference, lead to a decision, as, "Which design do you prefer?" or "Do you wish the oval mirror or the round one?" Likewise, questions which involve a matter of quantity or amount, such as, "How many do you wish?" tend to draw out the customer's intention. In either case, the salesperson assumes the article in question to be satisfactory but avoids asking the customer outright if she wishes to purchase a certain one. Getting the customer to answer a question favorably in regard to some minor point is more tactful and eliminates much of the possibility of an unfavorable reply.

The salesperson may ask, "Do you wish to pay for this or do you have an account?" or "You wish to take this with you?" Such questions imply that the decision is made and suggest an answer which indicates that the customer wishes the merchandise. In situations of this sort the salesperson must be reasonably sure that the customer really intends to make the purchase and is satisfied with the merchandise. There are times when a customer hesitates to say,

"I'll take it," even though she has decided she wants the article. When there is no apparent reason for her delay the act of closing, as suggested by the salesperson's readiness, may serve to draw her attention to the fact that no further delay is necessary. It must be emphasized that salespeople should use such closing suggestions only after all the preceding steps of the sale have been given sufficient time and attention.

There are other customers who make their decisions more quickly and definitely. These individuals generally express their desires in a decided manner and indicate openly what their reactions are toward the goods before them. When dealing with a customer of this type the salesperson must use caution and discretion in her actions and questions so as not to cause the customer to feel that her decision is being taken for granted. It is better to invite a decision in a positive and direct manner than assume or imply that she has decided to purchase. The salesperson may say, "We want you to be completely satisfied," or "Which do you prefer?" The customer will then be likely to make a decision.

**Make the Close Agreeable.** It is well to remember that many customers are now better informed on merchandise and have definite ideas of what they wish to buy. They are also more alert to selling methods, which means that any tactics which might be interpreted as "rushing" the sale are definitely ruinous to a favorable close and create so much resentment that the customer who knows her own mind will immediately lose interest and leave. In other words, the salesperson should never appear to be in a hurry to make out the sales check or have the sales book too much in evidence. It is unpleasant to be made to feel that the salesperson is more interested in making out the check than she is in satisfying one's needs. Besides, people are always fearful of being hurried into buying something which does not exactly suit them. A good salesperson will avoid such a situation and will endeavor to make the close of the sale natural and agreeable.

**Expressions Used in Closing.** The following list of expressions used in closing are classified into two groups, those which are desirable and those which are undesirable. There are, of course, many others but this group is representative and will give the student an idea of right and wrong forms of closing:

**Desirable Forms**

Do you wish to pay for this or have you an account?

Will you take it or shall I send it?

Do you wish the green one or the blue one?

How many can you use?

We shall be glad to send your hat out if you wish to wear the new one.

Are you sure a dozen will be sufficient?

**Undesirable Forms**

Do you want this?

Will one be enough?

Don't you like this hat?

Why not decide on this now?

Have you decided yet?

Isn't this what you were looking for?

Certain forms of closing are considered more desirable since they are more positive in form and are more likely to lead to a favorable decision. The suggested answer involves her decision, or makes it necessary for her to come to a decision. Any question asked should make it easy for the customer to say "Yes." In this way her mind is brought to a state of agreement. It will be noted that those forms which are listed as undesirable are more apt to lead to the answer, "No," or to indecision. For this reason they should be avoided.

**Avoid Delays After Decision Is Made.** It seems necessary to again stress the importance of being able to give complete and prompt service after the customer says, "I'll take it." The efficient salesperson will see that no delay occurs which might endanger the close of the sale. The salesbook and pencil should always be kept in readiness for writing the sales check. It is poor business indeed to have to borrow a pencil or look for the salesbook. Any information regarding delivery or shipping should be given promptly and accurately. The manner in which the salesperson handles these details leaves an impression and becomes a factor in building up a feeling of satisfaction in the customer's mind.

At this point in the sale, additional purchases may be suggested as a means of rendering further service as well as increasing the amount of the original sale. This form of selling is known as suggestion selling and will be discussed in the chapter which follows.

**Retaining Customer Favor and Good Will.** The salesperson should always thank the customer and make her feel that her business is appreciated. Express this appreciation by a sincere "Thank you," and "I shall be pleased to help you again." Closing the sale

should be accomplished in such a manner that the customer will carry a pleasant reaction with her as she departs.

In every sale there are two elements which have a decided influence upon the customer's reaction and her desire to return to the store. They are: (1) the sales interview must be handled in a courteous, intelligent, and efficient manner from beginning to close, and (2) the customer must be satisfied and pleased with the merchandise at the time of purchase and with the service it gives during the period of use.

Building business for the future is a necessary part of every sales interview. Each interview, whether it involves a large order or is only a matter of giving directions, answering questions, or rendering any of the numerous small services of the store or department, provides an opportunity to establish an agreeable relationship between the customer and the store.

#### WORD STUDY

technique  
concentrate  
discrimination

alteration  
involves  
discretion

## CHAPTER XV

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### SUGGESTION SELLING

**What Is Meant by Suggestion Selling?** Suggestion selling constitutes an essential part of intelligent merchandising and is of sufficient importance to merit considerable thought and discussion. First, it seems proper to explain just what is meant by suggestion selling. Suggestion selling is the salesperson's attempt to offer goods to the customer which are appropriate to her needs but which she has not requested. The real basis for good suggestion selling must be the salesperson's knowledge of the customer's needs and an understanding of what is best suited to meet them. This, of course, involves a thorough knowledge of the merchandise, as well as the ability to analyze the customer correctly to determine what merchandise should be suggested. Suggestions must be appropriate as well as timely in order to convince the customer of the salesperson's desire to be of assistance to her. Service thus becomes a basis for good suggestion selling. It should never be misused by an attempt to urge the customer to buy that which she neither needs nor wants.

Before suggesting additional merchandise the salesperson should try to determine if the customer is in a hurry or is shopping leisurely. Hurried shoppers usually resent being detained by a suggestion to consider other goods. Avoid being insistent when the customer indicates a decided lack of interest or states that she has no use for the suggested merchandise. Insistence only arouses antagonism and creates ill will. It is also unwise to suggest additional purchases when many customers are waiting to be served, since this will cause those waiting to become impatient.

**Suggesting Substitute Merchandise.** Good salesmanship is put to a test when it becomes necessary to suggest some other item in place of that which the customer has requested. This problem is one which is common in everyday selling. There are numerous situations when substitution is required, but the following are representative and perhaps occur most frequently. Suggesting a substitute is

necessary under these conditions: (1) when the merchandise requested is out of stock; (2) when it is believed that merchandise other than that requested will prove more satisfactory because of its better quality; (3) when suggesting a substitute for a nationally advertised product.

*Suggesting a Substitute When Requested Item Is Out of Stock.* When requested merchandise is out of stock the salesperson will endeavor to satisfy the customer with a substitute article. If the article is only temporarily out of stock the salesperson may make a memorandum of the request and fill the order when the new merchandise arrives. In the majority of cases, however, the customer does not wish to wait and indicates her readiness to buy something else. It is poor psychology for the salesperson to say, "We do not have that, may I suggest this article, which is similar?" or "Can't you use anything else?" Statements or questions of this type are not positive enough and will too often cause the customer to answer, "No, I shall look elsewhere." It would be much better to suggest in this way, "We do not have the Y varnish in stock right now, but we have the X varnish, which most of our customers prefer because it dries more quickly and leaves a brighter gloss and wears equally well." In making suggestions of this kind it is essential that the salesperson introduce the substitute item with a feeling of confidence and enthusiasm. The salesperson's confidence in the quality of the suggested item will be a strong factor in drawing the customer's interest and attention. It is necessary for the salesperson to be able to explain the desirable features of the product being suggested in order to make the customer feel satisfied in accepting the substitute.

*Suggesting Better Quality Merchandise as a Substitute.* When the requested merchandise is in stock, but it is felt that other merchandise is more suitable or would prove more satisfactory, the salesperson must be tactful in suggesting better quality goods. A sale of this kind requires skillful handling to avoid antagonizing the customer. First of all, the original request must be shown. If the customer shows indecision or appears to be dissatisfied with the article, or if it is believed an article of better quality would serve her purpose better, the salesperson may then call her attention to the substitute merchandise and show specifically why it is superior or would give more satisfaction. The goods originally specified will not be criticized

as being inferior, cheap, or poor; instead, the virtue of the suggested item will be emphasized because of its better quality or greater durability, or, perhaps, for the advantage afforded by some special feature. The following sale illustrates how a situation of this kind may be handled.

*Customer:* I want a waffle iron, and I don't want to pay more than \$5.00.

*Salesperson:* We have a waffle iron here which is very good for \$4.95.

*Customer:* (Looks at the iron hesitatively.) Does it have a heat regulator? I prefer one with a regulator.

*Salesperson:* No, this iron does not have a heat regulator. (The salesperson places a newer and improved iron before the customer.) This is the latest improved model which has an automatic regulator. This dial can be set for high, low, or medium heat. A light signals when the waffles are baked and turns the heat off automatically. It is really a great improvement, isn't it?

*Customer:* It is. What price is this one?

*Salesperson:* It is \$6.75. I'm sure you will find the heat regulator well worth the difference in price.

*Customer:* I'll decide on this one. You may send it out.

The above sale illustrates how a customer may be directed to the better quality article after she has indicated an unfavorable reaction to the less expensive one. The salesperson first showed the customer what she asked for, then in compliance with her stated preference she offered a better quality waffle iron and explained to the customer its desirable features. The customer could not resent being shown the higher priced article, since she demanded a feature found only in the more expensive line. She left the store feeling satisfied over her purchase and felt well disposed toward the salesperson for showing her the improved iron.

*Suggesting a Substitute for a Nationally Advertised Product.* Many customers are guided in their shopping by national advertising and ask to be shown the product which they have seen advertised. If the article is not carried by the store, a similar item may be suggested. Salespeople should become thoroughly informed on the outstanding selling points of well known or nationally advertised articles, especially if one is selling a similar item and must meet



competition. The product carried should be studied in comparison with advertised brands in order to convince the customer that the store's own line of goods is of equal merit or possesses special features which compare favorably with those of the brand requested. As an illustration, a customer asked to see a certain nationally advertised brand of enamelware. The salesperson tactfully suggested a substitute in this way: "We do not carry the Blank enamelware, but the line we sell is manufactured to meet our specific requirements and is guaranteed to be chip-proof. It is triple-coated porcelain enamel and has extra strong heat-resistant handles. It is constructed of the finest materials throughout. We supply many of the leading hospitals and hotels with this line of enamelware, since it is especially recommended for wearability." It will be noted that the salesperson immediately acknowledged the customer's request and informed her that the requested brand was not in stock. She then proceeded to introduce the substitute.

When a substitute article is suggested in a pleasant manner and presented with a convincing sales talk, as in the above illustration, the customer will often decide that it compares favorably with what she had in mind and will be satisfied with the substitute.

**Suggesting Additional Merchandise.** There is a definite trend in modern retailing to stress suggestion selling as a means of increasing sales. The average sale can be increased if other items are suggested helpfully after the customer has decided to purchase the goods requested. The salesperson who learns the art of good suggestion selling and makes use of it will rise far above the average in her ability and earnings. Suggesting additional merchandise after a purchase has been made will bring an increase in the amount of merchandise being sold as well as an increase in profits.

The customer also receives advantages. The salesperson renders better service to the customer by suggesting those articles which she may have forgotten or those which seem particularly suited to her demands.

It is important that the selling efforts be extended beyond what the customer asks for, since many times a reminder is helpful in calling attention to a neglected need. A timely suggestion often saves the inconvenience of making a special shopping trip for something which was overlooked; consequently, the salesperson's sugges

tions usually are invaluable in helping the customer with her shopping problems.

**Suggest Additional Items After Original Sale Is Complete.** The matter of suggesting additional merchandise will naturally follow at the close of the original sale. Other merchandise should not be suggested until the original sale is completed or at least until the customer has made her decision and has stated her intention of purchasing the article. Her original request must be satisfied before further purchases are suggested. The object of such procedure is obviously to avoid diverting the customer's attention, which might cause her to lose interest or defer her decision in regard to the merchandise she is considering. Complete the sale, then suggest other merchandise.

The alert salesperson must watch for the opportune moment before suggesting additional purchases. This will depend upon details relative to closing the sale. Suggestions are likely to be more favorably received by the customer if they are offered before the original purchase is taken to the inspector's desk for wrapping, because she will be better able to see a relationship between the suggested item and her purchase while the goods is before her. Furthermore, the buying mood is still present and she is not yet ready to depart. The psychological effect of waiting until after the package is wrapped or the address taken is unfavorable, since by this time the customer is ready to depart and will not wish to be detained.

**Avoid Indefinite Questions.** It is essential that the salesperson avoid asking questions which make no definite suggestion or which encourage an unfavorable reply, thus closing further possibility of getting the customer interested in supplementary purchases. The following are too frequently heard: "Is that all, today?" "Anything else, Madam?" "Did you wish anything further?" Also such meaningless questions as, "What else do you wish?" or "Do you think of anything else?" are totally lacking in helpfulness. Suggestions which are really effective must actually call something definite to the customer's mind. They should be offered in a friendly and helpful spirit and make the customer feel that you really wish to be of service in calling her attention to some article which you believe might interest her.

**Various Ways to Suggest Additional Merchandise.** There are

numerous ways to increase the sale by suggesting other merchandise. The salesperson should make a special effort to work out a system of suggestion selling which is particularly adapted to the line of goods being handled. Effective means of increasing sales will soon become apparent to anyone who watches every opportunity to sell more and better merchandise. Quantity buying should be encouraged as an economy to the customer. Companion items should be suggested in order to increase the usefulness of the article requested or add to the pleasure derived from it. Merchandise of current interest should be called to the customer's attention.

**Encourage Quantity Buying.** There are certain lines of merchandise which are especially adapted to quantity buying. Canned goods in grocery or food stores and packaged goods, such as soaps, tooth pastes, face creams, lotions, and other toilet preparations, are adaptable to quantity buying. Hosiery and handkerchiefs also are susceptible of suggestion with respect to quantity.

Canned or packaged goods are usually priced in such a way that quantity buying is encouraged. For example, such prices as two cans for fifteen cents or three boxes for twenty-five cents are familiar. When asked the price of a certain brand of tomatoes the grocer may reply: "They are three cans for twenty-five cents." The customer will recognize this as a saving and will probably buy the three cans suggested.

The same is true when selling other canned or packaged goods. The salesperson in a drug store will aim to sell two packages of tooth paste when only one is requested. Having an extra tube in reserve or for guests is a convenience. Packaged and canned goods are usually found in different sizes, as, for example, a small box of soap flakes may be priced at twenty-five cents and a large box at fifty cents. There is usually a saving in buying the large size. The salesperson may say, "The large size package is more economical. It contains more than twice the amount of the small box." This statement is more positive than merely asking, "Do you wish the twenty-five or fifty cent size?"

In merchandise such as dress materials or trimmings, the salesperson may again increase the sale by suggesting an ample quantity as a safeguard against a possible emergency or unforeseen need for more material. There is always difficulty in matching fabrics after

the particular piece of goods is sold out and this fact justifies the purchase of an additional amount. The same is true in selling woolen yarns. Salespeople who handle this merchandise should urge the customer to purchase a few balls of yarn more than the number anticipated to assure her having a sufficient amount for making the garment and to provide for repairs or alterations, especially in view of the difficulty of matching colors. For example, a customer wishes enough yarn to knit a sweater. She asks for four balls of yarn. The salesperson suggests: "I am sure you will find four balls of yarn insufficient to knit a long-sleeved sweater. Since it is so difficult to match colors, I would suggest that you take at least two extra balls to avoid disappointment. You may also need it for making repairs." The customer purchased the six balls gladly.

**Related Merchandise Suggestions.** Suggestion selling which has to do with related or companion merchandise is no doubt an interesting way to exercise one's ability as a salesperson. It has endless possibilities for increasing both sales and service.

A complete and thorough knowledge of stock in both your own and other departments of the store is absolutely essential. Visualizing the merchandise in the customer's possession also forms a basis for effective suggestion selling. To develop skill in this type of selling the salesperson will acquire a habit of forming mind pictures of each item of merchandise in relation to other articles which are its natural companions.

**Analysis of Related Merchandise.** All items which are naturally associated may be analyzed into three main groups: (1) those articles which supplement the use of article purchased; (2) those which constitute units composing an ensemble; and (3) those articles not strictly related but which the customer will probably purchase for auxiliary needs or purposes. Examples are given to illustrate each group.

The list on the next page indicates articles which should be suggested with the original purchase.

The second group of articles are related but differ from the preceding group in that they are not actually essential to the usefulness of the original purchase. This group is composed of accessory items, the purchase of which will increase the amount of satisfaction enjoyed in the article of original demand. Ensemble grouping has

become an important factor in modern display. Customers are becoming familiar with the grouping of related articles of merchandise and find it a real service and a source of help and satisfaction.

<b>Article Purchased</b>	<b>Companion Article</b>
Dress materials	Thread to match
Knitting needles	Yarn
Powder puffs	Face powder
Curtain rods	Brackets and screws
Bed springs	Mattress
Nails	Hammer
Candles	Candlesticks

The list which follows illustrates how merchandise is combined to effect a complete and harmonious ensemble.

<b>Article Purchased</b>	<b>Accessory Items</b>
Shoes	Purse and gloves, or hose
Gown	Shoes, hat, costume jewelry
Curtains	Draperies
Sheets	Pillowcases to match
Desk	Desk accessories
Living room suite	Rugs, lamps, draperies
Bath towels	Washcloths, bath mat, and shower curtain

The third group of merchandise is related usually because of some special need, use, or purpose. The original purchase which the customer makes furnishes the clue for the salesperson to suggest other merchandise. These are items which the customer will be likely to be interested in or may even need in view of her original purchase. As for example, a customer may be purchasing a fine set of dinnerware. As the salesperson completes the sale she wonders whether this customer is considering new table linen to use with the dinnerware. The salesperson says, "Our linen department has a fine selection of beautiful dinner cloths. There is a pale blue satin damask cloth which would be especially nice with this set of china. Miss Allen will be glad to show it to you."

In this way purchases are concentrated within the store, and business is increased as department forces cooperate. Clues of this kind should be watched for, not only as a means of increasing the store's business but to inform customers of lines of merchandise

carried and their location. Many times customers are unacquainted with the diversity of merchandise carried by a particular store and, after making a purchase of one kind of goods, will hasten to another store to make a purchase of another kind. With intelligent effort this business may be concentrated within the store.

Another example illustrates this phase of suggestion selling. A business man purchased an office desk in the furniture section of a large store. He needed many other supplies, such as stationery, filing cards, and manila folders. He intended to go to an office supply concern to make these purchases, but changed his mind as the desk salesman offered this information: "Our stationery section on the first floor carries a complete stock of desk equipment and office supplies. You will find everything you need in this line in that department. Mr. Brown is in charge of the stock and will be glad to help you."

Purchases which are likely to follow because of the special purpose, need, or occasion will be found in the list below.

<b>Article Purchased</b>	<b>Purchases Likely to Follow in the Same or in Other Departments</b>
Golf clubs	Sport sweater, slacks, and golf shoes
Baby buggy	Nursery furniture
Fishing tackle	Camping equipment
Bathing suit	Beach costume and accessories
Bridge tables	Tally cards, favors, and prizes
Picnic basket	Picnic supplies and thermos jug

The preceding lists of related merchandise should indicate to the salesperson endless possibilities for selling goods through suggestion. To be efficient as a salesperson involves much more than merely selling what is requested. Indeed, suggestion selling broadens the entire outlook. Therefore, considerable time should be given to studying related merchandise, first in one's own department and secondly, throughout the store.

**Merchandise of Current Interest to Be Suggested.** Customers usually react favorably regarding special selling events, special sales, and advertised articles. Well-informed salespeople will know what lines of merchandise are being featured in these special selling events. Bringing special merchandise values to the customer's attention forms an important part of suggestion selling.

In larger stores the suggestion may often be made as a matter of information when directing customers. Customers always appreciate being given intelligent suggestions as the following example illustrates.

A customer was passing along the aisle and asked a salesperson to direct her to the rug department. The salesperson smiled and said pleasantly, "Rugs are on the eighth floor. Were you looking for any particular kind of rug?" The customer replied, "Yes, I want small seatter rugs for bedrooms." The salesperson gave this helpful suggestion, "We are having a special selling event now of Early American hooked rugs. There is a large assortment and all are specially priced. The elevators in the next room will take you directly to this department." The customer said, "Thank you. I'm sure I'll find just what I need."

Merchandise which is specially priced for a limited time becomes of interest because of the saving involved. Special selling events also give the customer an opportunity to buy in anticipation of future needs. The thrifty housewife watches for special sales on all household necessities and appreciates being informed of these events. For example, a salesperson in a linen section sold a selection of bath towels to a customer. Washcloths to match the towels are suggested and purchased. This done, the salesperson calls the customer's attention to a special selling of sheets and pillowcases which are now being featured, remarking, "As you see, they are the famous Crown brand. Laboratory tests have proved the wearing qualities for six years of service. Just feel the fine smooth finish and notice the firm weave. We have a choice of colored borders or all white." The customer welcomed this opportunity to stock up on bed linens at a saving. She purchased four complete sets of sheets and cases to match and left the store in a happy and satisfied frame of mind, grateful to the salesperson for her thoughtful and helpful suggestions. Salesmanship of this kind shows initiative and skill.

Knowing what is being advertised in one's own department and throughout the store is also a part of being well informed. Advertising loses much of its effectiveness unless salespeople follow it up by suggesting the articles advertised at every opportunity.

The following sale illustrates how an advertised item was suggested. A customer whose hobby was gardening came into a store

to buy some garden tools. The purchase amounted to about \$10. The salesperson remarked, "I'm sure you find your garden a source of constant pleasure during the summer." The customer smiled and answered, "I hope to spend most of my spare time there this season." The salesperson immediately thought of the garden furniture advertised in another department and said, "We have a set of garden furniture advertised today which you might enjoy seeing. It will take only a moment to see the display in the next room." The customer was at once interested in the garden table, complete with umbrella and chairs. Then it was suggested, "The set would be attractive in a shady nook of your garden and would certainly add to your enjoyment. There is really nothing more restful than a comfortable chair and a place to enjoy refreshing drinks on a warm summer day." The customer asked the price. "The set is specially priced at \$25.00 complete," was the reply. The complete set was ordered to be delivered and the customer appeared well pleased. In this instance the salesperson thus more than doubled the amount of his sale by knowing what was advertised and suggesting it to the right person.

#### **Other Items of Current Interest Which Should Be Suggested.**

The salesperson who is interested in her work will always inform the customer of merchandise which has just arrived or is the very latest in style, fashion, or color. People generally are interested in new things and most shoppers, even the most hurried, are willing to pause long enough to inspect an article which has just arrived. A moment's pause is sometimes all that is required if the goods prove to be especially appealing.

Many people make a special effort to obtain the newest and latest in wearing apparel or in furnishings for the home. They pride themselves on having things that are newer than or different from those of their associates. To these people, the appeal of something new or unusual is quite irresistible. They are always grateful to the salesperson who calls their attention to merchandise of this nature, and take great pleasure in leaving the store with purchases which reflect their sense of originality. Keeping up to date is a serious business with many individuals, and to remind them of this fact is usually considered a compliment to their good taste and excellent judgment.

In nearly all lines of merchandise on the market today there



are new and improved features being added to well established products. In many cases entirely new products are developed and are waiting to be introduced to the public. The grocery salesman may say, "Mrs. Smith, have you tried the new ABC soapflakes? They have been developed by a new scientific process and are especially recommended for washing fine silks and woollens." Or he may inform the customer of a new cereal: "Mrs. Smith, the Blake Company has a delicious new cereal on the market which you might like to try. We are offering a special introductory package this week at 12 cents."

Good suggestion selling may take the form of an invitation to inspect a new and improved electrical appliance. This is all that is needed to remind Mrs. Housewife of her long-felt need for a new iron or vacuum cleaner. The efficiency and economy of these articles have strong appeal. Salespeople should find genuine pleasure in being able to introduce new and improved products to the customer. Sincere enthusiasm may be exhibited over articles, the possession of which will add to the joy of living.

#### WORD STUDY

suggestion  
constitutes  
essential  
ensemble

substitute  
  
antagonize  
originality

## CHAPTER XVI

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### HOW THE SALESPERSON CAN AID IN DEVELOPING BUSINESS

This chapter is concerned with many subjects, which though considered primarily from the standpoint of the retail employee, are applicable in many other places. Using the telephone properly, keeping promises, giving good service, and being accurate are examples of topics which have general application.

The knowledge gained to this point will be helpful in developing business. This chapter, however, points out a number of ways which have not been considered before in which the salesperson can aid the store in which she is employed.

**Be Cooperative.** If the store is to succeed all the employees must work together. This is essential in any enterprise where the services of more than one person are required. A real desire to succeed and to see the firm develop a permanent business will result in cooperation on the part of the salesperson.

**Know Your Customers.** It is important to know the buying habits of customers. Knowing their likes and dislikes makes intelligent use of suggestion selling possible. In some stores the salesperson may call customers with whom she is acquainted about the arrival of new merchandise which she believes will be of interest to them. Observation of customers' buying habits and attention to their remarks will enable the salesperson to know her customers. Keeping a card file for the purpose of noting customers' names and addresses and making a record of their preferences is a valuable aid in selling.

Knowing the customer's name is worth while since generally people like to be addressed by their names.

Learn all you can about potential demand for items. One publication gives the following suggestions: <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Collins, "How Successful Salesmen Sell Karastan Rugs," The Bulletin of the National Retail Dry Goods Association, March, 1937, p. 72.



An atmosphere of friendliness is established when the customer is addressed by name.



Customers appreciate help in preparing for guests.



Knowing customers' food preferences aids in giving good service.



Knowing dates, such as family birthdays, indicates interest and presents opportunity for selling additional items.



Learn the quantity purchasing habits of customers.



Including packages previously bought with present purchases is an indication of willing service.

*Courtesy of Lobby, McNeill & Lobby, Chicago*

In the daily newspaper many floor coverings salesmen find some of their very best leads to new business.

Real estate news points opportunity for extensive refurnishings;

Marriage announcements indicate home-makers' extensive needs;

Birth announcements often mean a completely furnished new nursery, with perhaps a maid's room;

Club news may mean: new lodge rooms; home furnishing needs for country club lounging rooms; women's rooms; locker room furnishings; guest bedrooms, etc.,

Church news often features fund-raising for recreation rooms, rectories, Sunday school rooms, etc.

The above serve as examples of places where demand is indicated. You can, perhaps, think of sources of information that would be applicable to the merchandise which you are selling

**Know Your Store.** Customers often ask the salesperson where additional articles of merchandise can be found. In such cases, misinformation is more irritating than lack of information. It would be well if stores could make available to customers more complete information about the location of merchandise. Not long ago a woman well trained in home economics and interested in consumer problems remarked the need for furnishing more information to the customer regarding the location of merchandise within the store. Steps are being taken to improve this situation through advertising, store directories, etc. Be that as it may, the salesperson is the representative of the store and the customer expects her to know where merchandise is located even though it may be in another department. The organization of the store, which provides for departments, will probably not have the same significance to the customer as to the store employee. To the customer the store is an institution.

So in general the salesperson should learn as thoroughly as possible the location of merchandise in other departments. If the store is not too large she should try making a rough diagram indicating the general nature of the merchandise carried in each department. Learning about other departments will take time and planning, but the effort will be rewarded in increased capacity to render service. Sending customers to a salesperson on another floor will result in better service to the customer. Too, the favor to the salesperson probably will be returned.

**Changes in Merchandise Locations.** In some departments merchandise is being constantly moved and changed about in an en-

deavor to achieve maximum efficiency. This means alertness and care on the part of the salesperson if she is to keep informed.

Sometimes the locations of whole sections are changed in order to produce better results. Seasonal changes are always necessary in certain lines of merchandise. While definite principles about the location of departments have been established, variation will occur as necessity requires. It should also be noted, perhaps, that much is yet to be learned about "best" locations for various types of merchandise. It may well be that such a problem will be of interest to the salesperson after her experience and ability makes it logical. The significance of the problem to the beginning salesperson is that it is up to her to watch location changes in order that she may correctly furnish information to customers.

**Other Questions.** In addition to questions about merchandise there may be any number of questions in regard to matters related to the store. For example, customers may ask:

Where may I have my glasses adjusted?

Where may I have my watch repaired?

Where is the Adjusting Bureau?

Where can I have monograms put on a traveling bag?

Where may I have a picture framed?

Where is the Credit Office?

Where is the rental library?

Where may I have a gift wrapped, and is there a charge for this service?

Where is the nearest telephone?

Where may I get lunch?

Where can I check a package?

These are illustrative of what the salesperson may be expected to answer. As stated before, to be able to do this means that the salesperson must spend considerable time studying the store to learn locations. She should not be discouraged by the necessity of giving information or directions to customers. It should be emphasized that in the early part of the salesperson's experience (as well as at all other times) she should not guess, but should secure the correct information at the first opportunity.

**Know the Store Advertisements.** The alert salesperson watches the advertisements of her store. It is discouraging to a customer to go to a store in response to an advertisement and find that the salesperson approached knows nothing about the advertisement or the merchandise featured. Here is another instance where the cus-

tomer will think of the salesperson as a representative of the store as a whole.

An interesting example of the importance of the salesperson's familiarity with store advertisements is related in an alumni bulletin of the Research Bureau for Retail Training of the University of Pittsburgh. The advertisements of a certain New York store were clipped from the papers in that city during March and April of 1933. One hundred advertisements were found to contain 533 selling points. In shopping for the advertised merchandise it was found that 100 salespeople used only 47 per cent of these selling points. The lineage in these advertisements cost the store more than \$10,000. Thus the student can see that the waste from lack of knowledge of the advertisements cost the store a considerable amount of money.

In the case cited a remedy was suggested and tried. First, proofs of advertisements were delivered to section managers before three o'clock in the afternoon. Second, section managers were instructed to underline and otherwise indicate talking points for merchandise which appeared in the advertisements. Third, a letter was written to each buyer which instructed him to inform his salesforce about merchandise advertised and show them the advertisement. Also, mimeographed literature stressing the reasons why advertisements should be read was prepared and distributed.

During the time this was being done a second test was made of another 100 advertisements containing 558 selling points. Sixty per cent of these selling points were used, an improvement over the figure for the first trial, which was only 47 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

From this example it can be seen that considerable loss results from lack of familiarity with the store's advertising on the part of salespeople. The loss from failure to use selling points developed in the advertising is increased by the disappointment of customers at finding that salespeople are uninformed with regard to advertised merchandise, which results in a lack of confidence in the store and its employees.

**Knowledge of Special Communications to Customers.** At times stores send out letters to a selected list of customers, informing them of special services of the store. For example, a convention or other

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<sup>1</sup>Bertha Perk, "Yes! It Can Be Done," *The Retail Bureau Alumni Bulletin*, Research Bureau for Retail Training, University of Pittsburgh (January, 1934), pp. 14-15.

important event held in the city may draw people from many parts of the country. A store operating on a large scale may send letters to patrons suggesting that those planning to attend the convention make use of their store while in the city. It might be suggested that the store will be a convenient place to meet friends. Or special services to out-of-town visitors may be offered. It can be seen readily that a customer who receives a letter of this kind is likely to be disappointed to find upon reaching the store that persons employed there are unaware of the store's plan. The visitor may have felt honored by such a letter of invitation and may have told her friends about it. For this reason means should be provided to inform the salespeople of special programs. The salesperson's responsibility then is to enter into the spirit of the program just as she would in receiving guests in her home. Using letters for the purpose explained above is one of the ways of securing good will and is worth while if it is well planned. The value of such a procedure may be greatly decreased by lack of interest and cooperation.

**Be Honest.** Honesty is the best policy. And since honesty is a factor in developing business, it is fitting that it be considered here. In store practice, honesty plays an important part in the matter of weight and measure. It should be observed that errors, even though unintentional, cause suspicion and resentment. For the store's part, the management assumes the employee is honest, and usually possesses testimony to this effect in the form of character references.

Honesty must be based upon character which is influenced by home and school training as well as by inheritance. How leisure time is spent may have great influence upon one's conduct and thinking.

The most helpful discussion that can be given is one which deals with the importance of developing strength of character. Sometimes students observe individuals who appear to prosper by methods that do not conform to ethical standards. The idea that right conduct and honesty are matters of private judgment, fitted to the occasion, and that dishonesty is necessary for material success, sometimes finds place in the minds of students. Careful observation over a period of time will alter this concept.

Honesty makes for confidence—a factor that is often declared the basis of success whether of an individual or a business institution. Dishonesty weakens the character of an individual. Character

building, it should be remembered, is a cumulative process extending over the period of a lifetime.

**Development of Telephone Selling.** Telephone calls can be a valuable help in selling. Telephoning allows the customer who finds it difficult to get away from home or business to buy. In order to increase telephone orders the service, of course, must be good. Merchandise and prices must be right.

An appreciable percentage of customers are willing to buy by phone. Some stores have developed a large amount of business on the basis of telephone selling. The grocery and department stores with high quality merchandise and delivery service are good examples. Many products today are nationally advertised and their quality is so well established that inspection is unnecessary. Such articles may be purchased routinely by telephone.

Since in the relatively small store the salesperson may be called upon frequently to handle telephone orders it is important that she be able to do it courteously and efficiently.

In larger stores it is possible to have a telephone order department. The salesperson, however, will receive calls from customers and therefore she should be proficient and pleasant in using the telephone.

Though there is an increase in delivery expense in connection with the use of the telephone in selling, there is a compensating reduction in sales cost. Since the customer is pretty well decided as to her needs before calling, less time is required to make the sale.

The efficient retailer of today realizes the importance of repeat business. Telephone service should be conducted in conformity with the policy of holding present customers and endeavoring to add new ones. The telephone, with delivery service, makes it possible to expand the business, and the remoteness of large areas may be offset by the development and efficient function of this service.

Customers today buy oftener, if in lesser amounts, than formerly, and here, again, a service which makes shopping easier is advantageous. In many communities a large percentage of the customers have telephones in their homes. This increases the possibility of making the telephone business of the store important. Surveys have revealed that the average telephone order is often larger than that received in the store.



It is desirable to have customers come into the store to shop. The telephone, however, is a powerful supplementary aid in selling if proper efforts are expended in the development of a sales program. The disadvantage of a location which is not entirely desirable can sometimes be met by stressing the use of the telephone.

A telephone selling program generally is better when built upon the basis of incoming calls. Calling customers may be satisfactory if a salesperson has a personal following and feels that she knows the likes of her customers pretty well. This phase of telephone selling must be handled cautiously and tactfully if good will is to result. Having sufficient telephone facilities and making the service pleasant to customers will be a decided influence in instituting the habit of telephoning merchandise orders.

The prospective or active retail salesperson probably will not be in a position to determine just how much emphasis should be placed upon this phase of selling. She is, however, definitely in a position to make the store's telephone order-taking service productive of good results. The telephone salesperson represents the store, and, in this capacity, can do much to help build good will. It would be unfortunate to have telephone order-taking or selling delegated to one who does not measure up to high standards in the performance of this important work. With that in mind principles of using the telephone will be considered.

**Use the Telephone Effectively.** A small booklet entitled *The Telephone's Big 10*, (published by the Illinois Bell Telephone Company, gives the following suggestions regarding the use of the telephone:

1. Answer all telephone calls promptly. Nothing is more irritating to the other fellow than having to wait for you to answer.

2. When answering, always use an identifying name—the firm (or department) name and/or your own name. Cut out the time-wasting, out-of-date "Hello." For example, say "This is the Atlas Company, Mr. Ott speaking."

3. Speak distinctly and about as loud as in ordinary conversation. Don't mumble—don't whisper—don't shout. Speak directly into the transmitter with lips about a half-inch from it. Don't try to talk with a . . . pencil in your mouth.

4. Be courteous in all your telephone contacts. Don't make the customer repeat because of inattention on your part. Show your interest by your pleasant tone of voice and by what you say. Get his viewpoint. Remember, when you are talking to a customer his impression is probably what you make it.

5. Don't transfer a call to someone else if you can take care of it or have

the proper person do so. The other fellow won't want to go over the same ground twice—once to the person who first answered and again to someone to whom the call is transferred.

6. Keep a pad and pencil close at hand so that you won't have to dig them up after the conversation starts. It makes a bad impression when you say "Wait a minute. I want to get some paper and make a note of that."

7. If you use price lists or records have them near the telephone. Avoid having to ask the caller to hold the line while you "look it up." If you have to leave the telephone to consult records or confer with another employee, it may be best not to keep the customer waiting. If he wishes take his number and call him back as soon as possible.

8. When making a call, it is common courtesy and good business to remain at the telephone until connected. The person you are calling doesn't want to waste his time, holding the line, until you are ready to talk.

9. When away from your desk or office, be sure that someone will answer your telephone and know when you will be back or where you can be reached. Otherwise, valuable time—customer's time—will be wasted.

10. When you have finished talking say "goodbye" pleasantly and replace the receiver gently. Don't end the conversation by slamming the receiver back—giving the customer a "crack in the ear." That makes anything but a good impression.

The foregoing suggestions are very practical and can, in the main, be applied by the retail salesperson who uses the telephone in dealing with customers. Other suggestions follow.

Proper enunciation which involves giving proper form to each sound in all words is important. Though proper enunciation is necessary in all speech it is doubly important over the telephone, since the one listening does not have the opportunity to observe the gestures and facial expression of the speaker.

Talking too rapidly or too slowly is a serious fault, especially over the telephone. It is possible to speak quite rapidly, however, if one is careful to speak clearly and expressively. A tone of voice which sounds mechanical is dull. Proper expression is highly desirable.

Before concluding the subject of telephone selling it must be emphasized that the only way the customer has to judge you over the telephone is by your voice. It is surprising to what extent the voice reflects the person.

**The Problem of Merchandise Returns.** The practice of returning merchandise is something which has become established in the minds of the buying public. It encourages thoughtless buying since the customer knows that if she is not satisfied with her purchase she

may return it. Some persons abuse the privilege accorded them and this makes the problem a difficult one. Many times, however, the customer is justified in returning merchandise because of error on the part of the store, or because of defects in articles purchased. The salesperson should be familiar with the returned goods problem and do everything in her power to help her employers meet it satisfactorily. Every store desires to avoid an excessive number of returns for several reasons:

1. Larger stocks of merchandise must be maintained if the return privilege is freely used. Customers' desires are varied and having goods out of the store tends to limit selection. This must be offset by larger purchases on the part of the retailer.

2. Another factor to be considered which is closely related to the one mentioned above is that sales are lost on articles which are not in the store at the time they are wanted. The selling season for some goods is short at best, and it is disturbing to have them held, especially for long periods, and then returned.

3. Merchandise is often damaged while in the hands of the customer. This means that the store must reduce the price of goods if there is to be any possibility of sale. Marking down merchandise is a serious problem for the retailer.

4. The cost of selling merchandise is an item of expense to the store. In cases where goods are returned the expense of selling them a second time is a loss to the store.

In addition, handling of the returned article is an expense. Where goods are picked up by the store's delivery vehicles, trucking costs are increased. The clerical work necessary in this connection must also be considered.

**Causes for Returns.** One of the causes for the return of merchandise is over-aggressiveness on the part of the salesperson. The customer takes the article and upon arriving home decides she has been "talked into" buying. She is dissatisfied so she returns the merchandise. If the sale is to be a success it is obvious that the customer must stay sold. A salesperson who knows the details of construction and the uses of goods can give a convincing sales talk without being over-insistent. A certain amount of aggressiveness is necessary, but discretion on the part of those who sell will make possible an intelligent use of this quality.

Selling unsuitable merchandise may be the result of lack of judgment on the parts of both the seller and the purchaser. In instances where the customer insists upon the wrong thing, proper selling is, of course, more difficult. The salesperson, however, should be sufficiently familiar with her merchandise to be able to guide the purchaser to a wise and appropriate selection.

Selling wrong sizes is a source of returns. Sizes marked on goods are not always accurate. Customers often make misstatements in regard to size. The salesperson should take sufficient time and use good judgment in the transaction in order to overcome this difficulty. In the case of wearing apparel the best way to make sure of correct fit is to have the customer try on the garment.

Color is a matter that must be handled carefully if returns are to be prevented. As in the previous situations discernment as to what is suitable is necessary if results are to be satisfactory.

Sending merchandise on approval is a factor in returns. It is conceded that, in general, this practice is to be discouraged. It should never be used as a device to escape a difficulty that arises. If customers can be led to see that this manner of selling is an expense which must be covered in the cost of the merchandise, she will not desire to support it.

Procedure in meeting requests that merchandise be sent on approval will, of course, depend upon the policy of the store.

Studies as to causes for returns of merchandise have been made and are valuable in giving an over-all picture of the seriousness of abuse of this privilege. There is reason to believe that the following quotation<sup>1</sup> from the report of one of these investigations is sufficiently applicable to present-day selling to merit careful consideration in connection with the returned goods problem:

While a number of the reasons for returns are charged against the customer in this study, it is obvious that under certain conditions some of them may be charged with equal justice against the salesperson who made the sale. Inattention to the requests of the customer, mental inertia, failure to get a clear understanding of the customer's desires, and faulty analysis, if any, of the customer's psychology are frequent causes of returns. From four P.M. until the closing hour many salespeople are not even satisfactory order-takers, and selling is out of the question. A study of the ratio of return to the sales which are made

<sup>1</sup> L. H. Grinstead, *Merchandise Returns in Department Stores*. Section 11—"The Analysis and Control of Returns," pp. 180-182. Special Bulletin of the Bureau of Business Research, College of Commerce and Administration. (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 1928.)

between the hours mentioned might show some interesting results. Visiting with other salespeople while the customer waits is another frequent selling fault, and the antagonized purchaser undoubtedly feels relieved of responsibility in making a return which under other circumstances would be considered unreasonable. Gossiping with customers about other customers and their actions in buying is another frequent indication of tactlessness which may lead to ill will and unreasonable returns. No store can afford to assume that these faults are not to be found in its organization. Continuous care in training salespeople to handle customers correctly must be exercised. The educational director should work out selling requirements and training plans for the various departments. Minor changes will probably be sufficient to adapt such training to the needs of floormen and other employees in these departments.

A surprisingly large percentage of salespeople are ignorant of the characteristics of the merchandise which they are selling. Every salesperson should be able to tell customers, without hesitation, something about the construction of the merchandise being sold; whether it will stretch, or fade, or shrink, or warp; and to make certain suggestions concerning using it. This information involves a knowledge of the materials of which the goods are made and the method of manufacture, all of which training courses can be worked out to cover adequately. Training in exposition is needed when technical matters are to be made clear to the layman, and salespeople should be well trained in this respect. A well-informed salesperson who cannot simply and clearly and impressively present her information to the customer is nearly as useless to the store as a less well-informed one.

Courtesy implies more than a knowledge of how to handle customers; it implies handling them with such tact and consideration that they will feel grateful to the salesperson for correcting errors into which they were about to fall, or for making valuable suggestions. Some people are trained from birth in the graces of courtesy, but all can attain them to a certain degree through constant application. Training departments can help by working out a series of suggestions to avoid offending customers.

**Give Good Service.** Conscientious application of the principles discussed in this chapter will promote good service. With retailers vying to secure good merchandise which may be sold at prices close to those of competitors, service becomes the factor which may cause a customer to decide to buy in a particular store. Often the merchandise is identical and service is the only basis on which a store can excel. For this reason service becomes of paramount importance.

**Acquiring Good Will.** Efficient service combined with satisfactory merchandise at the right price will result in repeat business. Many stores are pleased to make public statement of the fact that they have served families for years. Policies that establish such confidence make great stores.

It is difficult to regain the patronage of disgruntled customers.

If it is a question of making a sale which may lead to dissatisfaction and the possibility of loss of future business, the answer will be in favor of losing the sale. In other words, the acceptance of merchandise which is unsuitable should never be urged.

The value of developing good will is not sufficiently kept in mind by salespeople who think principally in terms of gain in sales. A broader outlook is more desirable.

**Examples of Acquiring Good Will.** The following illustration shows plainly how one firm developed good will in the mind of a customer. This person had bought a suit of clothes from a high-class store. Unfortunately he found after wearing the suit that it was too small. He therefore returned to the store and told the salesperson from whom he had bought the suit about his problem. The suit had been worn very little, but some time had elapsed since its purchase. The store, because of the lapse of time, might have taken the position that the responsibility was not theirs and that they would do nothing about it. Instead, they graciously suggested that the suit be picked up by their driver and brought to the store for alteration. This was done and the customer was pleased and grateful. Undoubtedly, this customer will return to this store when he decides to purchase another suit. Of course, this service involved cost on the part of the store. The suit was picked up, alterations were made, and then it was delivered to the customer. Yet this policy is profitable when results over a period of time are considered.

Another actual example of how good will is built should, perhaps, be cited. A customer had decided rather definitely upon the pattern and the approximate price he would pay for a suit of clothes. He went into a certain store and was shown a suit of the desired pattern at a price near what he expected to pay. When he tried it on, it seemed slightly small. From the positive attitude of the customer the salesman sensed that it would be difficult to sell him another suit and yet persuasion was not used. Instead the salesman suggested discussing the matter with the tailor who was near at hand. The tailor after looking carefully at the suit stated honestly that although the suit could be altered, the final fit would not be satisfactory and he would advise against its being altered. The salesman agreed. As a result the suit was not purchased. Some would say perhaps that this sale should not have been lost. The

customer, according to his own statement, would have bought the suit had the salesperson so advised. But also, according to his own report of the incident, the customer stated that when he was in need of another suit he would purchase it at this store, as this manner of doing business had won his complete confidence. Therefore, over a period of time, the policy of strict integrity will build patronage for this store. Just how far salesmen are to go in a situation of this kind is a matter of judgment. Stress on the customer's interest, however, is becoming increasingly important. Salespeople should endeavor to keep the customer's interest in mind at all times.

### WORD STUDY

develop	supplementary
cooperate	productive
appreciable	enunciation
aggressiveness	discretion

## CHAPTER XVII

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### THE INITIAL PERIOD IN RETAIL SELLING

Can you use your imagination just a little in beginning the study of this chapter? Suppose you have applied for a position as a salesperson in a retail store and have been accepted? In your imagination it may be either a large or a small store. Although there are differences in conduct of business and conditions of employment between the small store and the large store, many practices are common to both. Naturally you desire to make a good showing. What do you consider essential to accomplish this? Perhaps consideration of the topics that follow will help you.

**Use Care in Your Appearance.** The salesperson must use care in her appearance. If the store has suggestions as to dress, she should find out what they are and follow them.

**Be Patient and Courteous.** This is of much importance. The salesperson should keep this in mind in the early days of employment as well as thereafter. Appearance, patience, and courtesy have much to do with impressions made upon others.

**Begin Learning Your Store.** Use any spare time you may have studying the stock you are to sell and learning the location of other departments. It is important to know your store in order to direct customers to other departments.

**Use Intelligent Questions.** Good questions indicate a desire to learn and grow in the business. Before questions are asked give thought to the situation and perhaps the answer will be obvious; but do not simply guess rather than ask questions.

Older and more experienced salespeople usually are glad to help the beginner if they are approached properly. In large stores beginners may be given sponsors to aid them in the early period of employment.

**Need for Best Methods.** Following best methods for carrying out the duties which recur is economical because it not only saves the time of the employee but reduces supervision expense.



The best ways for doing specific tasks can be devised and followed. This will make for smoothness and orderliness.

Directions and established procedures are necessary and should be regarded as a help rather than a hindrance by the employee.

The rule that the telephone is to be used for store business only, serves the interests of efficient operation.

**Use Telephones for Store Business Only.** There are often restrictions placed upon the use of store telephones, and the reason is obvious. The store telephone is provided for use in conducting store business. This service represents a large item of expense to the store and is an important factor in sales and service.

Incoming personal calls should be kept at a minimum as they occupy the time of the one for whom they are intended and also that of others in answering, calling to the phone, or taking messages. These incoming personal calls also keep customers' calls waiting. This results in the loss of business and good will.

**Knowing to Whom One Is Responsible.** In well managed organizations delegation of authority usually is carefully and clearly planned. In most cases it will be evident to whom one is responsible. When the authority is not well defined or when conflicting orders are issued the employee should consult the personnel office. One usually knows which person is one's immediate superior, and, unless there are instructions to the contrary, is responsible to that person.

**Keep Promises.** Some customers are unreasonable and practically demand as a condition of purchase that delivery be made at a certain time. Major alterations, for example, may be required and often they must be completed within a limited time. The salesperson should as far as possible meet these requirements and, of course, the beginning employee is anxious to make sales. Care must be taken, however, that only promises which can be kept are made. The customer is likely to be better pleased to be told courteously that fulfillment of her request is impossible, and have alternatives offered her, than to receive a promise that will not be kept. Situations of this nature require the utmost tact, and, where there is doubt, the salesperson, particularly the younger one, should consult someone in authority before making a promise which would involve the risk of disappointment. The salesperson's promise is, in reality,

the store's promise and should be as faithfully kept as that of a personal nature.

**Be Punctual.** Punctuality is an indication of efficiency. Discussion of this topic brings to mind a case which will clarify the point. A young man who had made an excellent record in college and was made a member of an honorary fraternity because of his scholarship, secured, upon graduation, a position which had promise of developing into something worth while. It may have been that he did not like some phase of the work, but, whatever the cause, he made a poor record for punctuality at his place of employment and finally was released because of it. Even though he had qualities which made him a successful student and promised success in his work, this habit of tardiness was not to be tolerated.

The salesperson usually is requested to report for work enough in advance of the opening time of the store to be ready for work when the store opens for business.

In larger stores a time clock is used for recording the time of entering and leaving. The importance of each salesperson recording her own time cannot be overemphasized. Honesty requires that this be done.

**Be on the Job.** Absence should always be kept at a minimum. When absence is unavoidable the store should be notified as soon as possible. The smooth operation of the store depends upon this. Although often there are extra salespeople available, they cannot always do the work as well as a person regularly employed in the section. Where absence is necessary, the earlier the proper official is informed of it the sooner is he in a position to provide a replacement.

The importance of regular attendance means that the salesperson should do everything possible to keep herself physically and mentally fit. Of course, there are exceptions which make absence justifiable, and this is understood. Many companies provide for full or part payment of salaries in case of absence due to illness. Such plans usually provide specific amounts, depending upon length of service.

**Medical Attention.** In stores where medical aid is provided it is considered quite important that the employee make use of it.

Proper attention to cuts, scratches, or other injuries may pre-

vent a serious infection. There is in business today much stress on safety, and employees should cooperate to the fullest extent in eliminating unnecessary hazards to themselves or customers or fellow workers.

**Help Prevent Losses from Shoplifting.** Unfortunately there are individuals who will take things from stores if opportunity is afforded them. They may be professional shoplifters or persons of weak character who occasionally yield to the temptation to take something they desire very much. When the salesperson has reason to believe that an individual has or is planning to take goods, she should notify someone in authority. In this situation good judgment is essential. Of course, suspicion should not be obvious.

**Do Not Hurry Customers at Closing Time.** Care should be exercised that customers are not made to feel hurried as closing time nears. Although this may take self-discipline an unhurried atmosphere should be maintained. Annoyance on the part of the salesperson when customers wait to be served at closing time should not be discernible. In the store's interest, an attitude of alert attention is to be shown the late customer and an effort made to satisfy her needs.

**Give Thought to Instructions.** Following instructions and learning rapidly are important in all retail institutions regardless of size. In the relatively small store you probably will receive directions and be supervised by the owner or manager, who will be able to watch your work rather closely.

Many of the larger stores give the beginning salesperson an initial training course. This course may vary in length from a few hours to several days. In one large department store the training covers a three-day period. The first is spent in the division where the instruction is given, the second in the section where the salesperson is to work, and the third is devoted to further instruction in the training organization. As indicated, one of the important functions of the training division is to give initial training in store system and rules and regulations—training which is essential before the beginner shall be allowed to represent the store on the selling floor. The question might be asked, If such training is given customarily, why is it necessary to study retail selling, especially such phases of selling as those under discussion? The answer is that the

salesperson is helped by the knowledge one acquires in a course on retail selling. Learning the practices and procedures of a store and those phases of its operation which are of proper concern to the salesperson is made easier by an understanding of broad principles. Experience is a valuable teacher and training makes it possible to gain more from it.

**Use Your Handbook.** Often the salesperson is furnished with a handbook containing the rules pertaining to retail selling. If you receive such a book study it thoroughly and keep it for reference. This material costs money and would not be prepared were it not considered essential.

**Do Not Expect Praise Too Soon.** Sometimes the beginner is one who has been given considerable praise at home or in school. This is especially true of students who have been above the average in their work.

To persons so accustomed it may seem for a time that their efforts go unheeded and that the organization takes little note of their presence. Business people have little time for giving praise and encouragement even where it is well deserved. One's abilities may be observed a long time before satisfying recognition is received.

Records are maintained, however, and in some stores the records are reviewed when salary increases, promotions, transfers, and so on are contemplated. With the present stress on personnel work this policy will be extended and strengthened. Beginners should keep in mind that development of themselves is the important thing and that recognition of merit will come in due time. It is better to receive gradual advancement than to be given responsibility for which one is unprepared.

**Suggest Improvements.** Most well-managed organizations welcome constructive suggestions that are thoughtfully and tactfully given. The young employee is sometimes a little impulsive and this should be guarded against or the suggestion may be regarded with little favor and may even invite rebuke. Consult an older employee and give the matter careful thought before offering a suggestion.

Large stores often have boxes in which written suggestions may be deposited for the consideration of the management. Rewards are sometimes given for suggestions of special merit.

The wise management realizes that in coming in contact with

the details of various phases of operation the intelligent employee has an opportunity to see ways in which improvement can be made.

**The Need for the Salescheck.** The salescheck is sometimes regarded as being rather unimportant. This emphatically is not the case. The salescheck serves as a record of the transaction to the customer and the store. Should any difficulty arise in connection with the sale the check serves as a means by which the trouble can be investigated. Even though the customer may evidence lack of interest in the procedure, it is the duty of the salesperson to write the check carefully and handle the sale in keeping with regulations established for the best interests of all concerned.

**The Salescheck.** Customarily duplicate copies of the salescheck are made. Some stores make more than one copy of the original. The number of copies, however, will depend upon the use made of the salescheck, but it is desirable at least that the store and the customer each have a copy.

The complexity of store system, therefore, varies from the salescheck with one duplicate copy to the more involved system, where several copies are made and where different parts of the check go to various agencies within the store.

In the preliminary training courses of the larger stores thorough instruction is given in handling the different types of sales and this instruction covers numerous situations that are likely to arise. In stores where such training is not given it is usually because the system used is not sufficiently complex to require it. In that case it is expected that the discussion of store routines given here will be helpful to those who do not receive special instruction on entering service.

**Things the Salescheck Often Shows.** The name and address of the store is usually printed on the salescheck. If the sale is to be charged the name and address of the customer is accurately and legibly written. The salescheck shows the items purchased with prices and other descriptive data. Details in regard to special services or mailing instructions are entered in space provided on the salescheck.

Care should be used in writing the description of items purchased so there will be no question as to identity later. In numerous cases questions have arisen where the salesperson, in order to save

time, entered the items in such a way that at a later date it was difficult and even impossible to ascertain what items were purchased.

The salesperson is often indicated by a number. When the sale is made she places her number upon the salescheck and thus receives credit for the sale.

In view of what has been said thus far preparation of saleschecks would seem very simple. There are, however, a number of situations for which the salesperson must remember the proper procedure for entering the sale. The form for the salescheck is made sufficiently flexible to provide for various procedures in transaction. It is, therefore, simply a matter of knowing how to write the check in the manner specified for the transaction involved.

For example, merchandise may be bought by a customer to be sent to some other person, possibly to a person living in another city. In this situation care must be taken in connection with the names and addresses of both parties. Or the sale may involve special delivery, or perhaps specific delivery instructions. Again, the customer may be away from home and wish the article sent to her temporary address. Another transaction involves an exchange of merchandise. To summarize, a number of situations are common to experience and it behooves the salesperson to learn all that is possible about the store system during the period of training.

**Types of Sales.** Several types of sales are described below:

1. *Cash Take.* In this type of sale the customer pays cash for the article and takes it with her. The salescheck for the cash-take sale is simple.

2. *Cash Send.* Here the article is paid for but is to be delivered. In a sale of this kind care must be used in getting the address of the customer. If it is to be sent to someone other than the buyer, the name and address of the one to whom it is to go must be recorded accurately.

3. *Charge Take.* In this transaction the merchandise is to be charged but is taken by the customer.

The store requires in this case that the customer have means of identification. Provision is made for this usually by furnishing a card or other means of identification which the customer will present to the salesperson. Whatever the system, it is important that the customer be properly identified before merchandise is released.

### 1. Cash Take

DATE	A	Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	No. Pay	KIND OF SALE
11-15		957	9	16	Cash
NAME TO					
ADDRESS					
CITY					
STATE					
QUANTITY TO THE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY DEPT.					
AMOUNT					

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION	
2	pr Rose	79	1 58	
1	pr soap		25	
	Acct. Tax		1 83	
			05	
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		957	9	104-16
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		957	9	2 00
MWS				AMOUNT OF SALE
Kind of Sale		No. of Check	No. of Cash	AMOUNT OF SALE
104-16		16		1 88
TAX		SALES		
104-16		X		

Place stub of Original in tally envelope.  
Enter sale including tax on envelope.  
Give entire duplicate to customer as receipt after it has been stamped by cashier.

### 2. Cash Send

DATE	A	Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	No. Pay	KIND OF SALE
11-15		485v	48	17	Cash
NAME TO					
ADDRESS					
CITY					
STATE					
QUANTITY TO THE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY DEPT.					
AMOUNT					

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION	
1	pillow		1 98	
1	Instruction book		25	
	Acct. Tax		2 48	
			08	
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		485v	48	104-17
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		485v	48	2 75
MWS				AMOUNT OF SALE
Kind of Sale		No. of Check	No. of Cash	AMOUNT OF SALE
104-17		17		2 56
TAX		SALES		
104-17		X		

Place stub of original in tally envelope.  
Enter sale including tax on envelope.  
Give stub of duplicate to customer as receipt after it has been stamped by cashier. Mount remainder of duplicate on shipper.

### 3. Charge Take

DATE	A	Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	No. Pay	KIND OF SALE
11-15		3853	38	18	Chg
NAME TO					
ADDRESS					
CITY					
STATE					
QUANTITY TO THE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY DEPT.					
AMOUNT					

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION	
1	bat soap	79		
1	eye's powder	3 50		
	Acct. Tax	4 29		
		17		
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		3853	38	104-18
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		3853	38	4 42
MWS				AMOUNT OF SALE
Kind of Sale		No. of Check	No. of Cash	AMOUNT OF SALE
104-18		18		4 42
TAX		SALES		
104-18		X		

Have customer sign. Get credit authorization.  
Give entire duplicate to customer as receipt after it has been stamped by cashier.

### 4. Charge Send

DATE	A	Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	No. Pay	KIND OF SALE
11-15		5559	25	19	Chg
NAME TO					
ADDRESS					
CITY					
STATE					
QUANTITY TO THE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY DEPT.					
AMOUNT					

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION	
3	Knock cloth	2 98	2 98	
	Acct. Tax		09	
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		5559	25	104-19
DATE		Subsequent's No.	Dist. No.	AMOUNT RECEIVED
11-15		5559	25	3 07
MWS				AMOUNT OF SALE
Kind of Sale		No. of Check	No. of Cash	AMOUNT OF SALE
104-19		19		3 07
TAX		SALES		
104-19		X		

Give stub of duplicate to customer as receipt, after it has been stamped by cashier. Mount remainder of duplicate on shipper.

### 5. Charge to One and Send to Another

DATE A	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	4451	49	20	chg
NAME TO <b>MRS. T. C. JORDAN</b>				
ADDRESS <b>333 N. PARKSIDE AV.</b>				
CITY <b>LAKE</b>				
STATE <b>3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR</b>				
CITY <b>MN 3612</b>				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				
<b>MRS. A. R. DANIELS</b>				
ADDRESS <b>5564 W. JACKSON BLVD.</b>				

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION
1	lamp	7.75	
	Acct. tax		24
Total			
104-20			
MRS. A. R. DANIELS			

DATE	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	4451	49	104-20	8.19
NAME TO				
ADDRESS				
CITY				
STATE				
CITY				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				
MWS				
AMOUNT OF SALE				
104-20				

Have customer sign. Give stub of duplicate to customer as receipt. Mount upper portion of duplicate on shipper.

### 6. C. O. D. (without deposit)

DATE A	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	3509	35	21	C.O.D.
NAME TO <b>MISS RUTH HANSEN</b>				
ADDRESS <b>130 N. CENTRAL AV.</b>				
CITY <b>MADISON</b>				
STATE <b>2H</b>				
CITY <b>HUM. 6114</b>				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION
1	pe. gloves	1.29	
	Acct. tax		04
Total			
104-21			

DATE	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	3509	35	104-21	1.33
NAME TO				
ADDRESS				
CITY				
STATE				
CITY				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				
MWS				
AMOUNT OF SALE				
104-21				

Give stub of duplicate to customer as receipt after it has been stamped by cashier. Have rest of duplicate mounted on C. O. D. shipper.

### 7. C. O. D. (with deposit)

DATE A	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	564	52	22	C.O.D.
NAME TO <b>MRS. H. C. WILCOX</b>				
ADDRESS <b>2431 LUNT AV.</b>				
CITY <b>WESTERN</b>				
STATE <b>S</b>				
CITY <b>Div. 6189</b>				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION
1	dress	14.95	
	Acct. tax		45
	deposit		15.40
			4.50
Total			
104-22			

DATE	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	564	52	104-22	10.90
NAME TO				
ADDRESS				
CITY				
STATE				
CITY				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				
MWS				
AMOUNT OF SALE				
104-22				

Give stub of duplicate to customer as receipt after it has been stamped by cashier. C. O. D. Future Delivery requires delivery date and day, deposit, and department manager's O. K. In body of check. Place colored label on duplicate shipper for date of future delivery with an 8 day limit.

### 8. Parcel Post

DATE A	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	1359	13	27	
NAME TO <b>MISS BETTY SCHNEIDER</b>				
ADDRESS <b>3934 COLLEIDGE SACRAMENTO, CALIF.</b>				
CITY <b>LEE</b>				
STATE <b>NEE</b>				
CITY <b>Tri. 0953 W</b>				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				

QUANTITY	ARTICLES	PRICE	EXTENSION
1	doll	5.95	
1	art. clothes	7.00	
	Postage		7.25
			27
Total			
104-27			

DATE	Subsequent's No.	Dept. No.	No. Pkgs.	KIND OF SALE
11-15	1359	13	104-27	8.22
NAME TO				
ADDRESS				
CITY				
STATE				
CITY				
NAME TO (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVERY BODY)				
MWS				
AMOUNT OF SALE				
104-27				

Kind of Sale to be indicated in proper place, as chg., C. O. D., etc. If package is sent to address within state of Illinois, add account tax. If sent outside the state of Illinois, no tax is charged. Call shipping department for correct charges. Give stub of duplicate to customer as receipt.



4. *Charge Send.* In this sale the merchandise is charged and is delivered to the same name and address.

5. *Charge to One and Send to Another.* The merchandise is charged to one person and sent to another, in which case special care must be given to record the names and addresses of both parties. Shipping instructions must be carefully written.

6 and 7. *C. O. D. Sales.* In this type of sale the merchandise is to be delivered and payment is to be received by the store's driver. Instructions as to delivery or shipping must be written clearly. Definite date for delivery is important to avert rejection because of delay.

8. *Cash Send—Parcel Post.* Here the article is paid for but is sent by parcel post. The postage charges are added to the purchase price.

*The Tally Card or Envelope.* The salesperson is often required to prepare a tally which summarizes the sales for the day. The various kinds of sales are recorded, totals are shown, and the tally turned in each day.

*The Salesbook.* Saleschecks are usually placed in books which have firm, durable covers which facilitate the preparation of the form. A place is provided for the tally. Each salesbook is given a serial number and each check is numbered. Thus a salescheck number, such as 20793-12, indicates that Check Number 12 on Serial 20793 itemizes a specific transaction.

These numbers are for control purposes. They help to account for all sales checks issued. Erasures are not desirable and should be avoided. If a check is incorrectly written it may be voided on approval of the floorman and must be turned in with valid saleschecks.

**Kinds of Sales Checks.** The illustrations on the preceding pages are reproductions of sales checks used by a large department store:

**Want Slips.** Where merchandise which the store does not have is requested, the salesperson may be requested to make what is known as a want slip. Such a request should be observed in a conscientious manner. The use of want slips is a factor in helping the buyer gauge demand.

**Using the Cash Register.** The store will give instructions on the use of the cash register.

Before the beginning of the business day, change is secured and

placed in the proper compartments of the register. The money should always be counted to be sure that it is correct.

When the cash drawer is opened for some purpose other than to handle a sale, the transaction is called a "No Sale." Most stores require that "No Sale" slips above a specified number be approved by a supervisor.

Where an error is made in recording a sale it is usually necessary that the sales slip be marked "void" by someone in authority. Such slips are turned in at the close of the day's business.

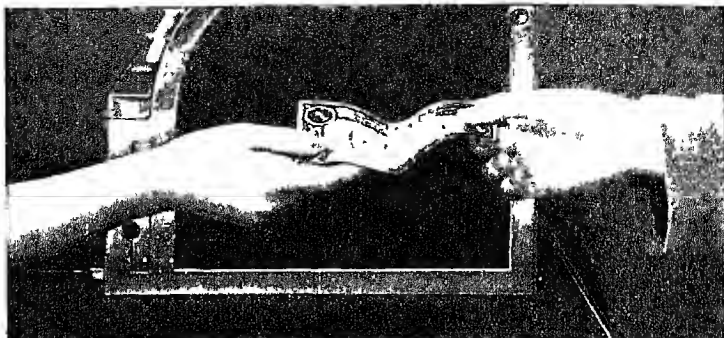


*Loss of Good Will on Account of Careless Wrapping Should Be Avoided  
Courtesy of Libby, McNeill & Libby, Chicago*

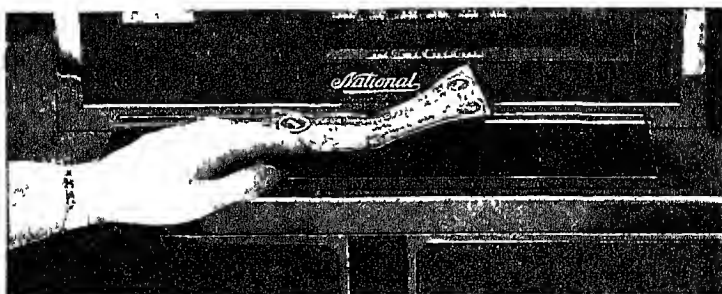
A cash report is made at the close of the day. This, with the money received, is turned in for safekeeping.

Record books have been designed for use in connection with the cash register. Records are of utmost importance to all stores, including those which are relatively small.

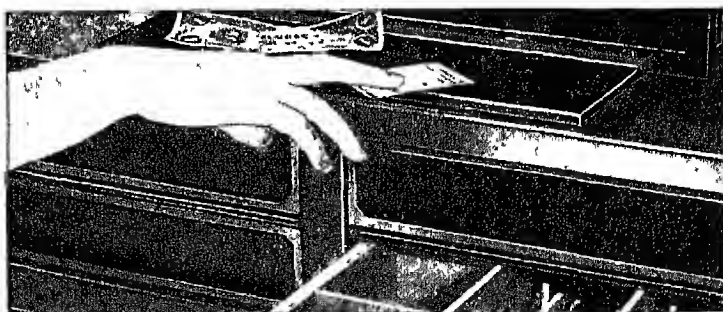
**Making Change.** The salesperson must be watchful in handling money. An honest customer may believe that the denomination of a bill tendered in payment was different from that actually received, or an unscrupulous customer may purposely attempt to defraud the store by deliberately insisting that a bill was larger than it really was.



1. Take customer's money. Repeat amount of sale and acknowledge denomination of currency or coin received from the customer, as "20c out of \$1.00."

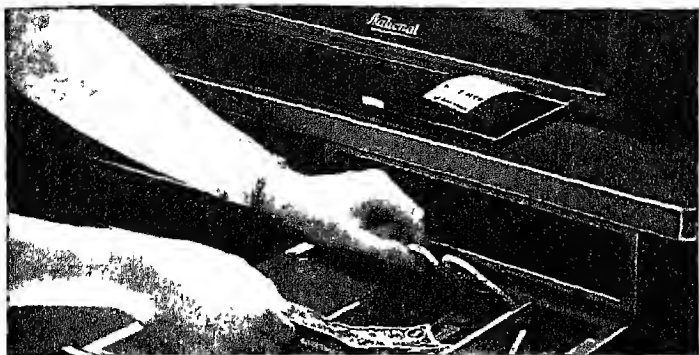


2. Place the dollar bill on the change-plate of the register before you. Then record the sale on the register.

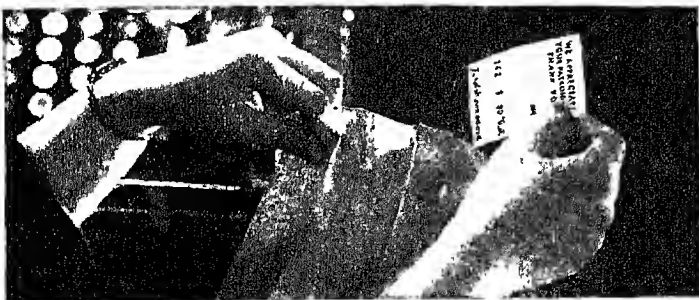


3 Take the printed receipt and place it on the change-plate beside the dollar. Then count change from the drawer, building change from the printed amount shown on the receipt, as 20c—25c—50c—\$1.00. Always build up to the amount received from the customer, and leave the currency on the change-plate until change has been counted from the drawer correctly.

*Courtesy of National Cash Register Company, Dayton, Ohio*



4. When the change has been built up to \$1.00, place the dollar bill in the cash drawer and close it.



5. Place the receipt in the sack or bag with the customer's purchase, or under the string if the package is wrapped. In case of error, adjustment, or refund, it is necessary that the customer return the receipt.



6. Next, count the change to the customer, first stating the amount of the sale. Simply say, "Your purchase was 20c—that makes 25c—50c—\$1.00. Thank you, call again." Always the last step is to hand the customer her purchase.

*Courtesy of National Cash Register Company, Dayton, Ohio*

It is, therefore, well to look directly at the customer and make some such statement as "three ninety-five out of five dollars," or to call back the amount received as "five dollars."

**Wrapping Packages.** Careful wrapping of packages is important. Most people have had the experience of receiving a carelessly wrapped package that came unwrapped and fell apart before the homeward journey was completed. This is exasperating and is likely to result in ill feeling toward the store. The salesperson who wraps her own packages should have special training in wrapping.

Wrapping articles that are likely to become crumpled or otherwise made unattractive in transit should be done with extra care. This is not easy when the salesperson is hurried, but practice and experience will grant facility.

#### WORD STUDY

initial  
grasp

punctuality  
adhere

delegate  
designate

## CHAPTER XVIII

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### SECURING A POSITION IN RETAIL SELLING

Securing a position is in reality a sales proposition for which knowledge of the principles previously considered should be helpful.

In making application for a position each situation contains elements that are unique; but there are general principles about finding employment which, if known, are more likely to result in success. Thus our subject has interest not only for use in the retailing field, but elsewhere as well.

If the student has been able to acquire some experience while studying (even though part time), the problem is made somewhat simpler. It has been urged that whenever possible some experience should be gained during the period of school attendance. Schools which have cooperative plans, whereby the student works part time in stores, report good results. In many cases the student is retained by the organization in which his initial experience in retail selling was gained. It is realized that often the student carries on independent study, and also that it is not always possible for the school offering courses in retailing to carry on a cooperative plan. Where this is true the student should make every effort to obtain part-time work. This cannot be too strongly emphasized since one of the most important factors in securing employment is experience.

**Preparation for Retail Selling.** The employment age is gradually being advanced. More training and maturity is desirable to meet present conditions. Productive life is short at the best and adequate preparation increases the chance for success during that time. The student contemplating a business career should acquire considerable general education. Education is as important for retail selling and commercial occupations generally as for other lines of work. It is unfortunate that some have held the belief that those who might not aspire to success in the professions, or in other employment where intelligence and similar desirable qualities are demanded, should receive commercial training and enter business. It is perhaps

true that some can succeed in business occupations, including retail selling, who would not succeed elsewhere. But that is because they possess certain qualities that meet the requirements of the job, and is not an indication that inferior capacity is adequate for success in selling.

It is, therefore, not out of place to repeat that the student should receive as much general education as possible, supplemented by vocational training. Vocational training in retailing will be judged by the results of its product—the students who have been given this training. Thorough training will undoubtedly help. As this fact becomes apparent more emphasis will be placed upon vocational training as a factor in judging applicants' fitness for positions.

In addition to gaining general education, vocational training, and, if possible, actual experience, the student should make a constant effort to improve his personality. This was discussed in Chapter II, "Desirable Qualities of the Retail Salesperson."

**Summary of the Content of Various Chapters.** Topics of the study material presented in this text are as follows: Chapter I discussed opportunities in retailing. Chapter II considered personality and discussed traits that are regarded as desirable in the occupation of selling. Study of the customer, the topic of Chapter III, is important to the student who desires to be successful in retail selling. Chapter IV, on the appearance of the store and the care of stock, gives the beginning salesperson an understanding of these important subjects. Chapters V, VI, VII, and VIII on merchandise and sources of merchandise information furnish background material for making a thorough study of various lines of merchandise. The student's job is not finished when he has completed study of one book or one course, however. Thorough knowledge of merchandise cannot be overemphasized. Lack of it, or its misapplication, is an outstanding weakness of many salespeople. Chapter IX on English and arithmetic should receive earnest attention and, if necessary, further study should be made. Poor English and weakness in simple arithmetic are common causes of criticism of students seeking jobs. The chapters on initial steps in making the sale, presentation of merchandise, objections and how to meet them, closing the sale, and suggestion selling deal with the mechanics of selling. Skill in performing each step of a sales transaction is the "stock in trade" of

the salesperson. Aiding in developing business and the initial period of employment have been considered. The final chapter deals with the application of one's knowledge of salesmanship in securing a position.

**Have a Plan.** Analyze your desires in regard to the work you want to do. Practically every student of retailing will have a preference for some particular type of merchandise and will desire to sell in that field. To this end, thorough study of the products one desires to sell is advised. Openings may not exist in the favored line, but the knowledge acquired in study indicates your preparedness. Bear in mind that securing a position is a sales proposition. In the beginning do not choose products that are too difficult to sell. Millinery, for example, would ordinarily be too difficult for a beginner. Relatively simple merchandise should be chosen with the hope that eventually you may work into something more exacting and perhaps more attractive from the standpoint of earnings and opportunity for promotion.

If possible, something should be known about the company to which application is made. An honest reason for wanting to work for a particular organization is likely to react favorably upon the employer. If, for instance, a given store is being considered, much can be learned about it from its advertisements. Talking to friends or others who may be employees will also be helpful in this connection. Visiting the store and observing various phases of its operation is likewise of value.

Having information and definite desires in mind is much better than merely inquiring as to whether any jobs are open. Such an inquiry seems to indicate that one is chiefly interested in securing a job rather than fitting into the organization and rendering effective service—which is what the employer considers important.

After careful consideration of one's personal desires and aspirations has been made, thought should be given to the qualifications one needs for success in a chosen line. What does the job require? Knowledge of the merchandise, as indicated before, is one essential. Personal qualifications also should be considered, particularly health, appearance, poise, and power to create confidence on the part of those with whom one comes in contact. A cooperative attitude and the ability to get along with others are essential in practically all jobs.



A good school record is always in the applicant's favor and is likely to be of value in securing employment.

**Having Something to Offer.** This may sound difficult in the case of the beginner who is without business experience. Yet even the beginner has something of value to an employer if the proper background has been provided. Correct methods must be used to sell preparedness however.

The beginner has or, at least, should have interest and ambition to supplement his training. In a sense school activities are really experience. Some firms, especially in times of business expansion, prefer beginners whom they can train in the way they think best for their particular business. The properly trained beginner has knowledge as to matters of dress and appearance, and knows something of the requirements of the job, at least in a general way. Too, beginners have youth and enthusiasm, alertness, and eagerness to establish themselves.

Briefly, then, analyze the possibilities and requirements, giving thought to your qualifications to meet demands of the job. Have an honest desire for employment of definite character and work toward your objective.

**Plans for Securing Employment.** In making this survey of possibilities several plans may be followed.

They are:

1. Making personal application at the place of business.
2. Discussion with friends and acquaintances.
3. Calling at employment agencies.
4. Writing letters of application in response to advertisements or on your own initiative.
5. Asking your school for aid.
6. Combining the above plans.

*Personal Application.* Many stores depend upon applicants who apply in person. The hiring official will vary in different types of stores. In the small store the store owner or manager usually performs this function. Large department stores have personnel offices, clerical workers who do the hiring, or who arrange interviews or department heads who may need to increase their sales. In chain-store systems the employment of help may be done by the district supervisor. Before applying for a posi-

tion in a chain store it will be helpful to learn first as much as possible about the system from the unit in one's community.

**Discussion with Friends and Acquaintances.** Some people have the mistaken idea that to ask friends for aid in securing a position is wrong. They feel that it savors of using a "drag." It need be nothing of the sort provided the one seeking employment has the qualifications demanded for the job and can make good. False pride should not stand in the way of accepting aid from friends. In many cases employers will welcome the opportunity to learn of capable people for jobs in their business. This does not mean that one should continually appeal to friends for aid in finding jobs. One's friends should be valued highly and never be imposed upon. Seeking assistance from friends need not be considered improper if it is remembered that mutual advantage exists in the situation. The employer needs help or he would not be considering hire. Moreover, he wants competent help. The prospective employee is eager for an opportunity to give service. In other words, the employee has something to sell which presumably will aid the employer. It is an objective matter and not one that can long be kept on the basis of favoritism. There are exceptions, to be sure, but they should be regarded as such.

There may, perhaps, be openings in the companies in which friends and acquaintances are employed. Some companies are glad to consider applicants recommended by their employees. It is well to remember that friends can sometimes promote our interests and further our ambitions. This does not mean that friends are to be cultivated with this end in view.

**Employment Agencies.** Employment agencies are used to some extent by retail stores as a means of securing employees. In addition to agencies which are operated for profit, there are state offices which make no charge for their services. These are provided by governmental agencies. The possibility of this opportunity for aid should be investigated for the community in which one lives. As the scope of employment agencies may become increasingly extensive, it is advisable for applicants for positions to familiarize themselves with the situation in their respective communities.

In dealing with agencies in the effort to secure a position, be as careful in preparation of the application and interview as you would

were you talking directly to a prospective employer. Dealing with the agency is a selling job. This is true because, naturally, the agencies want to select the very best employees for available positions. Their continued success depends upon finding acceptable and competent employees.

The matter of filling out the application blank and the points to be observed in making the interview will be discussed later in this chapter.

**The Application Letter.**<sup>1</sup> Many beginning, as well as some experienced, applicants for positions have difficulty in writing effective letters of application. After a person has had the experience of applying for a position and seeing on the desk of the prospective employer a stack of letters several inches high, the importance of this ability is realized. It is difficult to tell another just what to write in applying for a position. Every situation is different, and, obviously, a letter should not appear to be patterned from one of the numerous models available in books which deal with this important subject. This does not mean that such books should not be consulted. The material studied and mastered should, however, be applied to the particular situation, and one should remember that originality of thought and procedure is important. Principles and suggestions will be given here with the recommendation that they be adopted with specific regard to their application.

It is essential that the letter be well written, if there is to be an interview which will lead to the position desired. Therefore, it cannot be too carefully prepared.

The letter should be written on good quality 8½" x 11" paper. Unless a handwritten letter is specified a typewriter should, if possible, be used. Be sure that the ribbon on the typewriter is in good condition and that the type is clean. The importance of such matters often does not receive sufficient attention, with the result that the letter of application finds its way into the wastebasket.

Erasures on the letter indicate carelessness, and thus the applicant may be judged to be a person of indifferent habits and poor ability.

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<sup>1</sup> See John T. A. Ely and Daniel Starch, et. al., *Salesmanship for Everybody* (New York: The Gregg Publishing Company, 1936), which has a helpful discussion of this, as well as many of the other phases of the application of salesmanship principles to the problem of securing a position.

Spelling and English are, of course, of great importance. The form of the letter should be correct.

The letter should be interesting and convincing without hint of egotism or arrogance. Strong qualities should be stressed.

An attempt should be made to be specific in instances where it undoubtedly will be helpful. For example, to say that you have had store experience is general information. If you are experienced in retail selling it will be far better to state this specifically and tell the type of merchandise sold.

In stating educational qualifications it is well to endeavor to show as specifically as possible how this training relates to the job for which application is being made.

In cases where letters are being sent to several firms, mimeographed copies or tissues should never be used. This type of application in all probability will be rejected.

When one is writing and addressing letters, care should be exercised so that the name of the prospective employer is correct and, by all means, spelled properly.

The applicant should spend sufficient time in deciding to whom letters of application will be sent. The prospects must be selected carefully if good results are to be secured. The training, ability, and experience of the applicant should be just as thoroughly studied before the letter is prepared.

Even after maximum care is exercised in regard to all the points so far discussed, it may be necessary to write the letter several times before it will be satisfactory.

The letter should be so well prepared that it will stand out, as the prospective employer is likely to receive many communications in regard to the position for which application is being made.

Whenever possible give businessmen or women as references. In case the applicant has been employed previously, names of former employers are preferable. Not to give them may arouse suspicion. Where the applicant has had no previous employment, he may possibly secure permission of business people to use them as references. Names of teachers or ministers may be given for character references, but often these individuals are not informed as to the qualifications of the applicant for a specific position. A vocational teacher with thorough knowledge of the type of business in which the applicant

is interested might be an exception. Names of relatives and those who know the applicant on the basis of friendship alone should seldom, if ever, be given.

The letter of application can be handled in two ways. One method is to write the application complete on one page. Another is to write a short letter and attach to it a data sheet showing details as to qualifications. The method to be used depends most, perhaps, upon the amount of detail necessary for full exposition of one's qualifications.

*An Illustrative Letter.* Keeping in mind that illustrative letters are not suggested as "forms" to be followed, the following letter may be studied as an example of the application of some of the principles and methods covered in the preceding paragraphs:

6554 Hammond Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois  
July 14, 1940

A. F. Jones and Company<sup>1</sup>  
7124 Elm Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
Gentlemen:

My qualifications seem to fit me for the position advertised in the Herald today.

I am eighteen years of age and was graduated from a four-year commercial course in the Technical High School in June. From this training I am familiar with the principles of general and store salesmanship in addition to the basic principles of store organization and advertising.

During the past year I have been selling on a part-time basis in the sporting goods department at the A. and J. Athletic Goods Store, at 6443 Capitol Avenue. Because of my interest in this line I have made a special study of the manufacture of golfing equipment in connection with my work in school. This knowledge is strengthened by the fact that I play the game and have had occasion to discuss equipment with many golfers.

It is a pleasure to be able to offer as references the following:

Mr. J. H. Allen, Manager of the A. and J. Shop, at the address given, whose telephone number is Main 0450.

Miss Helen Brown, Personnel Officer of the Technical High School has a complete record of my school activities. Her telephone number is Main 2175.

My telephone number is Main 7147. I shall be glad to call at your store for an interview at your convenience.

Very truly yours,  
(Signature)

<sup>1</sup> Names and addresses of persons, schools, businesses, and telephone numbers are fictitious.

*Comments on the Letter.* The student will notice that the letter does not start out with the often used sentence, "I wish to be considered as applicant for the position, etc." The opening statement is in keeping with the principle that employment is a two-sided matter, and that the student has something to offer. A statement such as the one used should arouse interest, but, of course, it must be backed by qualifications that will prove assertion.

Instead of stating that the applicant completed certain retailing courses, the letter informs the prospective employer of the results of that training. This information will be of greater interest than a record of courses pursued at school.

The applicant in this letter is fortunate in having had some experience and, obviously, inclusion of information regarding his experience is important. It will also be noticed that the progressive attitude of the applicant is indicated by his study, as a part of his school work, of the merchandise he was selling. Here, also, his activity in playing golf for recreation is used as a selling point which should be effective.

The references include his former employer. Since the applicant is a recent graduate, with little experience, his selection of the personnel officer of the school as an additional reference is wise.

The personnel officer is more likely to be in a position to give an unbiased reference than are the teachers of the applicant. It will be noted that included in the application is the statement that the personnel officer has a complete record of the applicant and, thus, has a composite view of his school career. Modern schools are tending toward expanded personnel work and detailed record keeping, which is a splendid thing. The people in charge of this work are earnest and capable—a fact which should strengthen the confidence of those who are dealing with the school.

The telephone numbers of the persons given as references, as well as that of the applicant, are given. Thus, without moving from his desk, the employer can make two telephone calls, and then, if he desires to do so, he can contact the applicant. In this connection the applicant must be sure that his own telephone is attended, as it is annoying to employers to have a telephone number furnished and when it is called find there is no response.

If the applicant does not have a telephone, a government postal

card may be enclosed. It should be self-addressed and, on the side for correspondence, the following may appear:

Mr. David Smith  
6554 Hammond Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

You may call

at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
time date

Name

Store

The letter, in addition to being helpful from the standpoint of application, gives students an idea of the benefit of constructive endeavor in anticipation of the time when employment will be sought, and shows the advisability of planning for a definite objective.

**Letters with Data Sheet Attached.** The following letter is one to which a sheet is attached giving data concerning the applicant. The letter itself is brief, but the details regarding the applicant are organized in a systematic manner. This type of letter is especially valuable where more than one page will be required if the ordinary form of letter is used.

6554 Hammond Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois  
July 14, 1940

A. F. Jones and Company  
7124 Elm Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
Gentlemen:

My qualifications seem to fit me for the position advertised in the Herald today.

Attached you will find a sheet which gives complete information concerning my qualifications.

I shall be glad to call at your office for an interview at your convenience. My telephone number is Main 7147.

Very truly yours,  
(Signature)

The data sheet should be somewhat as follows:

Qualifications: David Smith

Age: 18  
Height: 5 feet 10 inches.  
Weight: 160 pounds.  
Health: Very good. Take considerable outdoor exercise.

**Education:** Graduate of the four-year commercial course at Technical High School. From this training I am familiar with the principles of general salesmanship in addition to the basic principles of store operation and selling.

**Activities in School:** President of the senior class, member of the student council, and business manager of the school paper.

**Special Qualifications:** Have a general knowledge of the construction and specific selling points of athletic equipment. Have a thorough knowledge of the construction and selling points of golfing equipment acquired in visits to factories, study of manufacturers' literature, and discussion with salesmen and users. Information from the latter has been gained while playing golf—my favorite recreation.

**References:** Mr. J. H. Allen, Manager of the A and J. Shop at 6443 Capitol Avenue—Telephone Main 0450. Miss Helen Brown, Personnel Officer, Technical High School—Telephone Main 2875. Miss Brown has my complete school record.

**Remarks:** Starting salary of less importance than opportunity for advancement into responsible position. My telephone number is Main 7147.

**The Follow-up Letter.** Sometimes a letter to an executive for a position may become lost, or, because of some pressing business at the time of receipt, no reply is made.

After waiting a reasonable time it may be advisable to write again, this time briefly, attaching a copy of the original letter. The second letter should tactfully state that perhaps the first letter was not received and that you are sending a copy of the original to be sure that the matter is brought to the attention of the addressee.

The importance of good application letters is emphasized when it is realized that a high percentage of applicants do not or cannot write them. Also when it is considered that there may be 300 or more applicants for one position it can be seen that the letter of the successful applicant must stand out as superior.

**The Application Blank.** The application blank may be instrumental in one's success in securing a position. For this reason great care should be used in preparing it. Too often an applicant because of indifference or nervousness does not prepare this form in such a way as to reflect the qualities desired by prospective employers.

**Neatness.** The writing should be the best of which the applicant is capable. It is realized that blanks often seem to provide



insufficient space for writing. Some people prefer to print for legibility, but often the prospective employer desires to see the handwriting of the applicant. Typing may bring the same objection. If the form is filled out at the place of business of the employer, a typewriter is not likely to be provided. It is best, therefore, to fill in the information in longhand, and do this as neatly as possible.

Though the blank must be neatly and accurately filled out, it is sometimes unwise to take long in accomplishing this. Too great effort in this regard may indicate slowness as a characteristic. Circumstances will vary, however, and procedure should be adapted to them.

*Honesty.* Accuracy is extremely important in filling out the application blank. Honesty, which is an important character trait, comes into play here. In addition, even though the applicant is accepted tentatively, the record will undoubtedly be checked thoroughly before the matter is finally decided. Inaccuracies discovered at the time of verification will reflect upon the character of the applicant.

At this point it might be well to consider character. The moral implications of character are apparent, and having a good character is soundly advantageous. Students sometimes get the idea that wrong practices and unfair dealings give one advantage that brings prosperity. They may have seen examples of people who, despite a reputation for deviceful practices, are seemingly prosperous. Careful thought and observation will show, however, that eventually dishonest tricksters are brought to account and must face the consequences. It is unfortunate that some people have more than one code for dealing with the various situations and relationships of life.

*Spelling.* Be as careful as possible in regard to spelling. Incorrect spelling indicates lack of knowledge and thought. It is a serious reflection upon the intelligence of the applicant. This applies to names as well as to the words used.

*Facts.* The applicant should have certain information clearly in mind. The place and date of birth, the addresses and telephone numbers of references, and the specific facts about previous employment, if any, are illustrations of details that usually are requested.

This practice will give confidence when actual procedure is confronted. Applicants should carry pens with which the blank may be filled out.

A rating is often shown upon the application blank, which is placed in file for reference when jobs are to be filled. The appearance of the blank itself has an effect upon that rating. It is not difficult to conceive of a situation where the blank itself would be the deciding factor in selecting an employee.

**Preparation for the Interview.** What has been said about the application blank would, in part, really be preparation for the interview, even though its importance was considered sufficient for separate treatment. More specifically, full information as to the details needed for completion of the blank would be of value to the applicant anticipating an interview. Other factors will now be considered.

*Appearance.* It is perhaps true that appearance plays too large a part in the evaluation of a prospective employee. The employer, however, realizes that the employee's appearance will be judged by customers. Therefore it is an important element of evaluation to the employer.

Knowing that one is properly dressed and in all ways presentable gives one confidence. Attention to such details as clean, well pressed clothes, polished shoes, neatly combed hair, and clean finger nails is very important. A hat should always be worn, although many high school boys are in the habit of going without one.

In this connection, the prospective employee is advised to avoid being overdressed. Conservative business clothes are preferable to those which are "flashy." This applies not only to suits, but also to such articles as neckties. Also, overdressing may cause the prospective employer to feel that the applicant is deliberately endeavoring to make an impression by this means, plainly indicating bad judgment. A sensible procedure is to dress as one would appear reporting for work if accepted.

Although what has been stated so far in regard to appearance has applied more specifically to boys, it should be kept in mind that the same principles apply to many of the suggestions made.

**The Interview.** The principles so far stated lead to the most important phase of the process of securing a position—the personal interview. Your letter may have been successful in securing the opportunity for an interview but this, by no means, is assurance that employment will be obtained.

The interview in many instances lasts but a few minutes. This means that the applicant must make a favorable impression on sight.

It should perhaps be noted here that in the waiting period, and during the course of the interview, one should be careful in regard to deportment. Sliding down in the chair in a careless manner, paying attention to what is going on in the office in such a way as to indicate curiosity, or manifesting nervousness are to be avoided. Smoking or gum chewing must be avoided without fail.

Nervousness while waiting for, or during the interview should be controlled as much as possible; but it should be remembered that practically every applicant for employment is likely to be nervous, because looking for a position does produce strain. Most employers and interviewers understand this and are willing to make allowance for it. Having the interview mentally planned as far as possible will be helpful in offsetting nervousness.

If the application blank has been filled out the interviewer will probably have it on his desk while he talks with you.

There are certain things that will be observed by him.

*Poise.* The proper amount of poise comes from having confidence. A well-groomed appearance promotes this. Apparent calmness and carefulness in speech indicate poise and refinement. Carefulness in speech does not imply unnaturalness or affectation in speaking.

In the position that is to be filled, especially in retail selling, ability to meet people is highly important. Store employers, therefore, must consider the applicant from that standpoint. In other words, he probably has or, at least, desires to have a mental picture of the applicant in relation to the requirements of the job.

*Speech.* Good address and good English are important. Talking too rapidly is a common mistake. The applicant may be somewhat tense, which tends to increase the possibility of rapid speech. As a result, speech becomes a jumble of words which make a bad impression.

The necessity for using good English in store selling has hereto-

fore been stressed. Ability to speak correct English is an important factor in applying for most jobs, and particularly so for selling positions where the employee must do considerable talking in daily work.

*Confidence.* A certain amount of aggressiveness is necessary and yet it must not be overdone; aggressiveness combined with tact will avoid antagonism. Furthermore, the applicant should learn to gauge her attitude to meet the existing situation. Directness and frankness are desirable, and these qualities gain respect. Submissiveness to the point of weakness will gain only sympathy, and jobs are not secured on that basis. Being confident, without seeming arrogant, is the attitude that is most likely to get results.

*Be Thoughtful.* Carefully chosen remarks should be made. The impression that the applicant is logical in thinking is of importance. Comments or questions that indicate interest may cause the interviewer to talk more freely. In that event, interruptions should not be made, and one should endeavor to learn as much as possible with the purpose of using all available resources to gain the point at hand—that is, to secure the position.

The interviewer should not have difficulty in getting information from the applicant on desired points. Any such difficulty will make it seem that something is being withheld and this arouses suspicion. It also indicates a lack of sales ability.

Talking properly to others in such a situation requires tact. Seeming confident, yet not overbearing, free in conversation, but not too talkative, making comments and asking questions which reflect logical thought all have a vital part in successful interviewing.

Be on time for the appointment. Business people justly stress punctuality, and opportunities for good jobs have been lost by carelessness in this regard. It is always wise to be a little early as this allows one time to get one's thoughts together before the interview.

Be attentive to what the interviewer has to say and do not be afraid to look at him. A straightforward expression establishes confidence.

**Preparing for the Interview.** Related to calmness and confidence is preparation for the interview. This does not mean that one should rehearse for an interview. In the first place it is practically impossible to anticipate what will develop. Secondly, if it were possible to re-

hearse with any degree of accuracy, the impression given would be that the applicant was well versed in making applications, but that the results obtained were evidently not favorable. There are, however, certain questions that are often asked, for which the applicant can be prepared. Some of these questions will now be considered.

**The Type of Work Desired.** One question often asked is, "For what type of work are you applying?" For those who are interested in retail selling the answer is obvious. The first may be followed by, "What would you like to sell?" This one is not so easily answered, because the applicant does not know what openings exist. Consideration should be given to several things. First, it would be well not to name a too demanding specialization, especially if the applicant is a beginner. Secondly, it would be well to have something definite in mind but state a willingness to work in any department of the store in the beginning. If the prospective salesperson has made a careful study of certain lines, so much the better.

**The Choice of Firm.** Another question may be, "Why do you believe you would like to work here?" If the applicant has visited this store several times and talked with friends who are employees or customers, the answer to such a question will be considerably simplified. The applicant will have definite reason for desiring to work in this particular store. It may be that she has been told that the store treats its employees well. Or, perhaps she has heard of the fair-dealing of the store with customers. There can be a number of reasons why she prefers this store, but having one or more should create a favorable impression. She is not a mere job seeker and she is sufficiently interested to have made an effort to find out about the store. Reading the advertisements of the store in which one is interested is instructive and indicates to what type of people the store caters and the class of merchandise carried. The inference that the applicant desires to work in the store in which application is being made is a good selling point. Like all selling points there should be sincerity back of it.

**Fitness for the Job.** The question, "Why do you think you can satisfactorily do this work?" may be asked. The applicant who has had experience in a similar line can, of course, point to success in a previous position as indication of her ability.

The applicant who has had no previous experience can point to

activities in school that may have a bearing on the present situation. The school record and special training for the job under consideration should be helpful. She should not, of course, indicate that her success is going to depend upon these things alone. Training is supplementary to the good qualities and aptitudes that she possesses. But if she can show success in her school work, and if it has covered retail training, including a careful study of merchandise, her position should be strengthened.

The beginner can impress the prospective employer with her earnestness, her desire to use care in reflecting the standards the store desires to maintain, and the possibility of her becoming a successful salesperson.

**The Question of Salary.** This question should be left to the last, if possible. First, endeavor to "sell" yourself as the logical person for the job. Salaries for beginners are usually established, which fact disposes of the matter.

If the job is desirable and you are eager for experience, a lower salary than anticipated may be accepted. In this case it may be well to state that although it is less than expected the position is being considered or accepted because it is felt that opportunity for promotion or increase will soon take care of the situation in regard to salary.

**The Close of Interview.** Often the position is not secured at the time of the first interview. After the matter has been gone over carefully, hesitation or an endeavor to prolong the interview will be harmful. It is better to leave cheerfully, confidently, and promptly. If it appears to be advisable and worth while the applicant may request permission to call later. But it is certainly a disadvantage for the interviewer to have to dismiss the applicant.

**The Follow-up.** The extent and time of follow-up for the job is a matter of judgment. Quite often it is necessary and advisable, but uncalled for persistence may reduce the chance for the position. About the only principle that can be advanced is for the applicant to endeavor to gauge the amount of persistence proper to the situation and circumstances.

Before leaving this matter of the technique to be observed in getting a position it is strongly urged that the student do careful reading on this subject. Present-day conditions require effective preparation for securing a position if good results are to be secured.

Specialized books on this phase of training are provided in the bibliography.

**Getting Ahead on the Job.** After the job is secured an endeavor should be made to get the good will of those with whom one is associated. Working with other people in a satisfactory manner is important and may be a deciding factor when promotions are considered.

An endeavor should also be made to learn the initial job thoroughly and to gain as much knowledge about the one next in advance as possible.

It takes a long time to master any line of work that is worth while. Sometimes young people become impatient and expect to achieve success quickly. Promotions usually follow when ability has been demonstrated, which requires a long period of earnest endeavor and hard work.

It is hoped that students of retail selling will have found in this book many things which will make their adjustment to business quicker and easier, and that success will follow their eager and earnest efforts.

#### WORD STUDY

logical	qualifications
constructive	egotism
definite	personnel
conservative	poise

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